WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE MEDIA:

A Practical Guide for People with Disabilities

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Communication is a vital component of everyone's life. In addition to interpersonal communication, traditional and modern media shape our knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

Today, more than ever before, media programming is being directed towards mass audiences. These uniquely powerful influences are reaching new and old audiences in wonderful ways.

Public Education through the media can and does change old attitudes and behaviours as well as influence new ones. With regard to people with disabilities, these efforts are becoming part of the work of governments, organizations of people with disabilities, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Background

In 1982 the United Nations Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna, the UN Department of Public Information in New York and Rehabilitation International organised a UN Experts Seminar on "Improving Communications about People with Disabilities". The results of that meeting
were: a set of Guidelines for the mass media on how to improve its language and coverage of disability issues; and suggested activities disability organizations could initiate with mass media representatives.

During the next Decade Rehabilitation International worked to implement the guidelines and to initiate mass media activities. At its World Congresses and regional conferences, film festivals and seminars on the mass media were held. Its member organizations in Spain, England, Poland, Japan, China and Ireland held comprehensive seminars. RI was also supportive of the establishment of the Ibero-American Group on Disability Communications which has held numerous seminars in Spain, Uruguay and Brazil. Through its UNICEF Technical Support Program, RI has supported seminars and public education projects on childhood disability and the media in Indonesia, India, Nepal and Pakistan. State-of-the-art reports on media conferences, projects and research have been featured regularly in its periodicals, especially the *International Rehabilitation Review* and *One In Ten*.

During the UN Decade of Disabled Persons, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has also been actively promoting in developing countries the use of the media to change public awareness and attitudes on disability and persons with disabilities. The ILO has assisted Governmental and non-governmental organizations, including disabled persons' organizations, particularly in *A*frica, to conceptualize, prepare and initiate public media campaigns. Countries having implemented such activities include Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, among others. The inclusion of a media component has now become an integral feature of all ILO technical cooperation projects in the field of disability.

**Current Initiatives**

In preparations for the first RI World Congress in Africa, substantial attention was paid to organizing sessions and events involving the mass media. A Film Festival, a joint International Labour Organization/Rehabilitation International Workshop
on African projects utilizing the media, and a main session on positive presentations of people with disabilities on film and television were held during the Congress week.

The Nairobi Plan of Action, a product of the 17th RI World Congress in Kenya in 1992, includes three goals in public education to be addressed during the next decade:

1. To prevent the formation of negative attitudes about disabled people;

2. To promote the acceptance of physical and mental differences in all societies; and

3. To involve and empower disabled persons' organizations in creating a climate of acceptance of disability issues throughout the mass media and educational curricula.

The International Labour Organization and Rehabilitation International plan to continue to assist Government and non-governmental organizations toward these goals. We believe this publication can be a substantial contribution to this process.
This Guide is the direct result of an International Labour Organization/Rehabilitation International Workshop on The Mass Media and Disability in Africa held 9 September 1992 as part of the 17th World Congress of RI in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Workshop served as a forum for representatives from 13 technical cooperation projects in nine African countries along with the participation of over 50 people from around the world.

During the last decade there has been significant growth in the quality and quantity of positive media efforts about or for people with disabilities. The United Nations Guidelines on Improving Communications About People with Disabilities were written in 1982 and have been used worldwide. There are numerous international reports and several documented experiences concerning disability and the media in Asia, North America and Ibero-America (Spain, Portugal and Latin America). This Workshop and resulting Guide, however, is the first record of the African experience.

The ILO and RI have encouraged and supported several projects in Africa that have included important components on Public Education and Disability. These landmark African
projects were presented at the Workshop to showcase what has been done, what lessons have been learned and to identify essential elements for an effective media strategy or campaign. The lively day-long Nairobi Workshop provided the impetus and resources for this publication.

This publication contains the essence of the Workshop presentations and discussions as well as practical guidelines, approaches, exercises, resources and suggestions. It can be used by organizations of people with disabilities—even those with quite limited funds. It can be used as an advocacy tool with governments, United Nations agencies or non-governmental organizations. This Guide can also serve as a vehicle to help people with disabilities and the media to work together, and to help bridge the gaps that keep each from truly understanding the other, concerning the crucial issues necessary to address, change and improve the quality of all of our lives.

The authors, ILO and RI would like to thank and credit all the presenters at the Nairobi Workshop. Their experience and materials gave substance to this publication as well as practical and innovative illustrations, many of which can be seen throughout this book. The agenda of the Workshop, a Participants List and other Resources can be found at the end of this Guide. Your feedback is welcome and can be addressed to:

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Training Department
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CH 1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

or

Secretary General
Rehabilitation International
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New York, NY 10010, USA
1. People with disabilities should speak on their own behalf. People with disabilities should be their own spokespersons whenever possible. This applies to children as well as adults.

**Rationale:**

A first person account ("I", "we") is nearly always more interesting and often more entertaining or emotional than one given in the third person, such as he, she or they. In addition, recent research in Nepal (Rina Gill, UNICEF) showed that when people with disabilities speak with confidence and authority about a particular situation, non-disabled audiences are more likely to both "like" and "believe that people with disabilities are knowledgeable."

**Example:**

It is often necessary, first, to educate people with disabilities to become their own spokespersons and therefore become more effective working with the media.
In Zimbabwe, the ILO project “Improved Livelihood for Disabled Women: a Regional Promotional Programme for Southern African Countries”, conducted a Disabled Women’s Writers’ Workshop with a focus on how to write articles, poems, short stories, do interviews. In addition to teaching journalistic skills, one goal was to help the “traditionally shy” women to raise their self confidence and public speaking capacities. The organizers said that “there was a marked improvement in the quantity as well as quality of contributions made by women with disabilities in promotion activities. Articles written by women who are disabled began to appear in newspapers and magazines.” A book compiling these works is under preparation.

2. **Identify Role Models.** A range of people with disabilities should be presented in the media. This includes people from various walks of life, rich and poor, urban and rural, various degrees of disability. The purpose of role models is to show people with disabilities, their families, teachers, and the public that disabled people can be achievers, not just observers.
Rationale:

It is often said that one of the biggest differences between Europe or North America and Africa is not necessarily that people with disabilities have more or better services. It is that they have a few more visible role models for younger children who are disabled or for parents of children with disabilities. By showing a range of people, one will more likely see someone like oneself or one's child. People with disabilities range just as widely in terms of intelligence, personality and interests as do those in the non-disabled population.

Example:

In Tanzania a story was told about a village where a family kept a child who was blind hidden in a room. When they had visitors, the family denied the child's existence. The visitors went back again to the family and again they were told, "We have no such child. Our neighbors are lying." Again they
returned, but this time they brought some talented (though "average") people who were blind. The people who were blind told their own stories, showed how they used a brailler, and explained about the work they did. This time the family said, "Oh, you can really teach people who are blind to do this? Yes, yes, let us bring you our son." And now the boy is studying at a teacher training college.

These parents are among millions who previously had no hope because they had no positive role models in the community or in the media.

It is important to note that though personal contact is perhaps most effective, a similar effect can occur from seeing various children and adults with disabilities in print and in visual media.

"When parents discovered that the Inspector of schools was blind, they felt that it was worth it to send their disabled children to school because they too might be able to get a 'very good job'".

Kenyan participant at ILO/RI Media Seminar

3. Educate Children. Children need to be shown positive, natural examples of the lives of people with disabilities.

Rationale:

Our children are our future. By reaching children, disabled and non-disabled, with creative and sensitive messages about the empowerment of people with disabilities, we have the potential to prevent negative stereotypical messages and create positive ones. Our goal is to not make children afraid of asking questions about disability, but to realize that it is natural to be curious, afraid, awkward or to stare at first. Most people who are disabled want to answer questions themselves and appreciate honesty.

Example:

In Mozambique the main organization of people who are disabled is called "ADEMO". During 1991, ADEMO contracted
author Angelina Neves who works with the Mozambican government and UNICEF to design a series of brochures for children about disability. The set of four brochures covers what it is like to be blind, deaf, physically disabled or mentally retarded. Each is written in the first person by someone with that particular disability. In a “story” they educate children about how they learn, adapt, feel, dream and play. They give the readers fun examples of games and exercises—as well as a lot to think about.

One of the best components of the projects is the final “Opinion Letter” that each reader is asked to fill out and return to ADEMO. They are asked their opinion about the brochures, about what is needed in the world for greater understanding and equality, and of each child’s own life with the every-day difficulties they experience. Finally they are asked for a photo or drawing of themselves.
Here are additional suggestions for reaching children:

- Have a contest where children “celebrate differences.” This could be a poster, poem, drawing or a drama competition.

- A traditional puppet show could include a puppet with a disability. Some skits could be about disability issues and others would simply be regular, creative traditional stories where one of the characters happens to have a disability.

- Take photos of children or adults who are disabled and have a few non-disabled children talk to the same people. Then make “photo stories” or “photonovellas” out of them where the non-disabled child narrates getting to know each person.

- At schools, have a science contest where children are asked to develop toys or aids that can be used by children or adults with disabilities, e.g. a ball with sound so a child who is blind can play, a picture communication board for someone who cannot speak.

- Write child-to-child stories like “Zaki and Nasir” and “I Can Make a Difference”.

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**Zaki & Nasir**  
by Mike Miles, Pakistan

Zaki and Nasir were brothers, aged 9 and 7. Their father was a shopkeeper in Peshawar, and their mother was a teacher. Zaki and Nasir also had an older brother living away from home and studying at College.

Zaki was doing well at school, but Nasir had never gone to school. Nasir was a little different from the other children. He was mentally handicapped. His brain worked slowly. He could say only a few words. He could not dress himself. He made a mess at mealtimes.

Zaki felt ashamed to have such a brother. Other children living nearby used to make fun of Nasir. They called him silly names. Nasir would get angry and try to hit them, and then fall flat on his face. Some of the adults said that Nasir had a jinn (curse).

When nobody else was at home, Zaki had to take care of Nasir. He couldn't go out to play. Zaki felt this was very unfair. Why should Nasir spoil all his fun? Nasir did not know any games. Looking after him was no fun at all.

One day, a visitor came to the house, looking for Zaki's father. It was his cousin, Dr. Daud. Zaki’s parents were not at home. Dr. Daud saw that Zaki had been crying. “What's the matter?”, he asked. So Zaki told Dr. Daud all about his brother Nasir, and how he had to look after him and didn't have any fun.
Dr. Daud listened carefully. Then he said, “Yes, I can see the problem. Now, what can be done about it?” Zaki cried, “What can I do? Nasir’s just as bad now as he was two years ago. He’ll be twice as stupid next year!”

Dr. Daud looked thoughtful. “I don’t think so,” he said. “Perhaps it depends on how clever you are!”

“What do you mean?” asked Zaki. “I’m getting good marks at school but Nasir can’t even start!” “Well then”, said Dr. Daud, “if you’re clever enough for two, you should be able to help Nasir to change for the better. Then you would both be able to enjoy yourselves.”

“How can I do that?” asked Zaki. Dr. Daud replied, “First I’ll have to talk with your mother and father”.

That evening Dr. Daud called again and had a long talk with Zaki’s parents. “I can’t give you any medicine for Nasir,” he said, “Because there is no medicine that can cure mental handicap. Nor is there any surgical operation that can help. But I think you have the solution right here in your own home.”

“What’s that?” demanded Zaki’s father. Dr. Daud explained, “With time and patience, you can teach Nasir to do much more than he can do now.” But Zaki’s father shook his head. “That’s just the problem! We don’t have enough time at home. I can’t have Nasir in the shop. He pulls everything off the shelves. And his mother is teaching at school, and then has to get our food, and then gives private lessons. We can’t stop working, or we won’t be able to buy our food and pay the rent.”

“But Zaki has the time.” said Dr. Daud. “He could do a lot to teach Nasir. Why not try it for a month. I’ll show you where to start.”

So each day after school, Zaki became Nasir’s teacher. And Zaki also learned a lot himself. He started teaching Nasir to put on his clothes. Of course, Zaki knew how to put on a shirt. You just pick it up, and put it on! But Zaki soon learnt that it was a more difficult matter for Nasir to put his shirt on.

First Nasir had to learn which was the front and which was the back of the shirt. Then he had to find the big hole and get his head through it. Then one arm had to go into the right sleeve. The other arm had to find the left sleeve. Then the whole shirt had to be pulled down.

Teaching Nasir to feed himself also needed many steps. Nasir had to learn little by little how to take a piece of chapati, pick up some dal with it, put it into his mouth, chew it and swallow it. It needed many tries and a lot of encouragement before Nasir could learn to do each step by himself. Zaki began to understand what Dr. Daud had told him: he had to be clever enough for two in order to teach Nasir. But whenever Nasir succeeded in learning a new step, Zaki felt proud of his brother.

A few months later Dr. Daud was passing the house and Zaki rushed out. “Please Dr. Sahib, come in quick.” Dr. Daud hurried in, thinking he would find someone on the point of death. But all he saw was Nasir, sitting in his chair looking very pleased with himself. Two other boys were standing there, from nearby houses.

“What is it? What happened?” Dr. Daud demanded. Zaki was so excited he could hardly speak. “It’s Nasir,” he gasped. “Nasir said a whole sentence! He never said more than two words together up to now. I’ve tried for weeks to teach him to talk. Just now my friends came in to see how Nasir was getting on. And he just told them, ‘Zaki giving sweets to Nasir.’ He did it! He said a whole sentence!”

Dr. Daud smiled. “I think you like your brother better than you used to.”
I Can Make a Difference
Draft Script for a Public Education Campaign, by B. Kolucki

Lots of people say "oh, you are just a child". And sometimes they even say "oh, you are just a girl". So, even though I do my chores and my studies, I kind of feel like I'm just there—if you know what I mean.

I told this to my grandmother one day, while I was helping her cook our family dinner. My grandmother told me a lot of things that day that made me change my mind about being both a child and a girl.

She said "You can make a difference, you know. You already do, Think of all the things you do to help me, your parents, your younger brothers and sisters. You learn to read and then you tell me what is happening by reading the paper to me—oh, there are lots of things." "But I want to do something more—something different" I said. And so right then and there, my grandmother and I worked out this plan.

She told me to really look around our village—at people, places and things. She said to look for things that I might think of that could help other people. Then she told me to think about what I like to do and come back and have a discussion with her again.

I saw a lot of things—but I especially saw a lot of mothers who were so very busy that they didn't have much time to pay much attention to their children. And I saw a couple of children who never played—people said that they were "disabled"—one couldn't use his hands and feet too well and two others were—just real slow and slept most of the time. I always stare at these kids—wondering what is up with them and I find myself thinking about them a lot too.

So, I came back and told my grandmother all of this. She said "You are a bright girl. You've seen someone who needs help and yes, you are very good with babies—see how much you play with your sisters and brother. Let us go to the Health Centre and ask the nurse if she knows about anything that you could do for these little ones."

We did that and now—I can't wait to tell you what I'm doing. It is lots of fun and even when I am tired, I find that I still have energy for these things—grandma says it is because I love my new work. And, my sisters and brother like my new work too because I practice with them. Here is what I do:

I learned to give a special massage—I relax the babies for a while, and then I tickle them and brush different parts of their body and talk and sing to them about what I'm doing.

I made a bunch of little toys—I filled match boxes with tiny rocks, old beans, pits and a bell—and I try to get the babies to shake them. Sometimes my little sister tries to play music with them and helps me.

I take the babies for walks—in the rain, in the sun—to the noisy market and to the quietest place I can find.

I take the babies to the Health Centre every two weeks—sometimes they get a shot and sometimes they just get weighed. And then I report back to their parents and they, so far, have been very happy with my news.

My teacher at school asked me to share what I do with the others. A few friends want to try the same thing—but I told them that they have to come up with their own new idea—first look around and match what is needed with what they like. Now it's like a game.

My grandmother was right. Everyone says that at least two of the babies have changed.
since I have been working with them. But the Health Centre Nurse tells me that sometimes it takes a long time to see even a little progress. That's OK—I like what I am doing. The babies like me and so do their parents.

I can make a difference. I am making a difference.

4. **Use humour.** When possible, use humour to convey ages, especially messages concerning the assumptions that non-disabled people make about life with a disability or people with disabilities.

**Rationale:**

Humour is a universal bridge over the awkwardness many people feel when approaching a new or unfamiliar situation. It can often quickly convey a message that, given in a more lengthy and serious way, would be didactic and uninteresting. Messages received through humour are also often remembered longer.

**Example:**

In the media this can be done through cartoons, jokes or dialogue, songs, puppetry, skits and drama.

At Rehabilitation International's 17th World Congress in Nairobi a well-attended session was held on positive presentations of people with disabilities in the media. The most popular example was a short video from the Finnish television series "Sister and Her Brother", that poked fun at the awkwardness and assumptions about disability felt by non-disabled people.

The video focused on a date between a non-disabled woman and a man with cerebral palsy at a restaurant. The waitress, ignoring numerous hints, continues to ask the woman what the man wishes to order, if he can pay, etc., avoiding any direct exchange with the disabled customer.

In a discussion that followed the video, it became clear that all over the world, in Africa, Asia and the Americas, people with disabilities had experienced just this type of degrading avoidance of contact on a daily basis. It was also obvious by the laughter that this humour crossed various cultural backgrounds.
HOW TO BEHAVE IF YOU MEET AN ABLE-BODIED PERSON

1. **Don't be taken in by his manner.**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair being pushed by another person.

2. **But adapt yourself to his style.**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair adjusting their pace to match another person.

3. **And don't laugh at him if he takes longer to go down slopes than you do.**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair struggling to go down a slope.

4. **Make sure that you are level when you speak to him.**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair speaking to another person.

5. **And don't run over his feet!**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair being tripped.

6. **Watch out you don't trip him up. He has further to fall than you.**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair falling over.

7. **Let him sit on your lap if the ground is all wet.**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair being held by another person's lap.

8. **And try to make him understand that you cannot make him a present of your wheelchair because you still need it!**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair holding onto another person.

9. **And above all be natural smile! After all - he is a person just like you!**
   - Illustration of a person in a wheelchair smiling with another person.

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People with Disabilities and the Media Working Together
One Congress participant who is disabled stated that the humourous way the film had presented this situation would make the message easy to remember. On the other hand, she contrasted, if the same message were only presented in a serious vein, such as, "Always address a person with a disability directly, not through a companion," it might be forgotten or not considered important.

Adaptations of the following additional scenarios have been made in several countries around the world and in various traditional and modern media.

- A non-disabled person talking to the guide dog instead of the person who is blind.
- Someone shouting at a person who is blind and being told, "You don't have to shout; I am blind, not deaf."
- Someone exaggerating their lip movements and shouting to a person who is deaf, not realizing that neither technique works.
- A cartoon or drama depicting a "Reverse Disability" where the world is made for everyone using, for example, wheelchairs. A non-disabled person feels very out of place when he or she enters a room with no chairs because "everyone has their own" or when they smash their nose entering a building that is made at a height for someone seated, not standing.

5. **Provide practical information.** Give information that will be useful in everyday life.

**Rationale:**

Media efforts are usually more effective if they contain some information that will practically help a non-disabled (or disabled) person the next time they see or meet a woman, man or child with a disability. Knowledge lessens fear and it is fear that often prevents or hinders interaction. Practical advice can be as simple as "How do I talk to someone who is deaf?" (Answer: I can speak normally and clearly so they can read my lips. I can write a message on paper. I can take cues from them.) Or, "What
do I do to help a person who is blind cross a street?” (I can let him or her take my elbow. I can walk a little ahead of him or her. I can tell them when we are reaching a curb, turning a corner, approaching stairs or coming to a rocky patch in the road.)

Also, it is true in most countries that where services are scarce, one can't simply say, "Your child who is disabled should be educated and rehabilitated." It is more important to show and explain how families, friends and other children can exercise, stimulate, encourage, talk to the child, encourage the child to take risks and to explore the world safely.

Example:

The following are examples of additional types of practical information that could be shared through various media. They can be adapted to a newspaper or magazine; made into a drama, video or radio script; developed into a booklet of illustrations with minimal text.

How Persons with Disabilities Can Be Integrated

These drawings show examples of how people with different disabilities can be integrated into community activities. The top left drawing depicts visual impairment, the bottom left, speech impairment and the the bottom right hearing impairment.
The drawing at the left shows how people with physical impairments can be integrated into community activities.

The Development of Skills for Integration

These drawings show mental, speech, visual and hearing impairments.
Removing obstacles for people with disabilities benefits everyone.

Rationale:

There has been much research that shows that improvements to the physical environment to provide access for people with disabilities actually benefit the rest of society as well.

Examples:

Slopes or ramps in place of stairs enable people with baby strollers or carts to move about with ease. Similarly, curb-cuts make it possible for people using wheelchairs to move about more independently, but also make getting around easier for those with luggage or baby carriages.

One vacation resort on the Kenyan coast is essentially accessible to people in wheelchairs due to its paved, sloped paths installed for easy transfer of luggage, food and service trolleys.

- Research in New Zealand has shown that most changes made in apartments and homes to accommodate people with severe mobility impairments result in safer environments for both young children and elderly persons, the two most accident-prone groups.
Wider doorways, fewer or no stairs, one-floor open design areas, walk or roll-in showers in place of tubs—these features can reduce the rate of serious accidents for all family members.

- **How the Road Helped Everyone**, draft script for a public education campaign, by Barbara Kolucki

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### How the Road Helped Everyone

It all started one day when the man in our village who can’t walk came to visit my father to ask for his help and advice. The man had been working in his house for the past 15 years, making toys and household items like brooms and brushes. People used to buy from him but it wasn’t what you would call a very busy business, except around holiday time when everyone would be both cleaning and buying what little toys they could for their children.

Well, this man thought that it might be a good idea for him if he could take his wares around the village—it would save others’ time and it might increase his business. But—here is the hitch, the road needed to be paved so that he could wheel himself and his cart along. Up until now the main road—really the only road—was very bumpy and rocky and muddy—all the things that made it impossible for our friend to move around.

The problem was that people he had spoken to before really didn’t want the road paved—they didn’t think it needed to be paved. They said that there were other more important things that needed to be done than paving a road for just one man. I thought that this kind of made sense, we did have many people and many needs.

But my father is a wise man. He thought and thought and talked and talked it over with our friend. Finally, together, they came up with a plan. They would make sure that if the road was paved—people would realize that it helped everyone.

And here is a list of all the people in our village that were eventually helped by that smooth, shiny, paved road. Can you think of others in your village or town that could be helped like this?

- The children whose goats carry heavy rocks to build the new buildings have a much easier time—they say the rocks don’t fall as much because the goats are steadier.
- The woman who is blind and teaches at a local school can now make visits to the childrens’ homes because it is easier for her to walk along now—people are saying that he children are doing better in school because their parents are more aware of what they are learning.
- The old man who delivers milk in the push cart gets his milk delivered faster—and with less bottles broken too.
- The woman with twin babies and another baby who cannot walk can push her children in a wagon to the market with her every day.
- Everyone who rides a bicycle to school and work says that the road is terrific too.

And me, well, sometimes I miss the rocks and mud and all, but—when I am finished with school and my chores, now my friends and I play a “hopscotch” game on the road or draw lots of designs with rocks and so, yes, I think the road is a good idea too.
Uneven surfaces or paths full of ruts or holes are difficult to walk on for any person. For disabled persons uneven surfaces make movement even more difficult.

Obstacles on the ground can be of a temporary or a permanent nature. Climatic conditions, e.g. heavy rains, may increase the problem. For those with moving difficulties obstacles will mean an irritating detour. For the blind or visually impaired obstacles will pose a further hazard over which they can stumble and hurt themselves.

Obstacles such as projecting building elements are a further safety hazard in the built environment. Examples of such obstacles are projecting signboards at low level, low doorways, open staircases, balconies and windows or shutters which do not open 180°.

Taken from "Designing with Care" published by The United Nations.
7. **Show people with disabilities as providers.** Use examples of disabled persons as providers of expertise, services, assistance and as sources of support for their families and community. Break through the stereotype of presenting people with disabilities as only *recipients* of charity, services and community goodwill.

**Rationale:**

A well-established social research finding is that the more a person is perceived as competent, the more deviance from a norm is accepted. This means that the more a person with a disability is seen as having achieved, the less importance is placed on the disability or difference.

**Examples:**

- In Zimbabwe, a traditional drama was written by a well-known writer, Cont Mhlanga. "The Story of My Wife" is about a woman with a disability and her husband. It includes songs, drums and dancing. It is part of a Roadshow which consists of the drama and a public debate on issues of disability. The debate is moderated by the National Coordinator for Zimbabwe, Ms. Lainah Magama (who uses a wheelchair), of the ILO Project "Improved Livelihood for Disabled Women".
Research conducted on the impact of the roadshow showed that Ms. Magama’s presence showed that “a person with a disability can be educated, bright and work like everyone else.” The audience was impressed by her presence, her competent, believable presentation and how their former beliefs about how people with disabilities could not be educated or “in charge” of their own lives had been so effectively disproven. Ms. Magama was the provider of information and as such, she was accorded at least equal status to the general public.

"Her presence was practical. It made the drama into a practical thing and not a theoretical thing. It is better to see what really happens, than to be told. It was Ms. Magama’s presence that made the drama effective. The players could not alone change peoples’ attitude. Now people saw a (real) disabled person. And she told them some other points after the drama."

A woman from the audience of the "Jazzman Show—the Story of My Wife" in Zimbabwe
8. **Show Active People with Disabilities.** Disabled persons should be shown as active members of their communities and society, not as passive and dependent.

**Rationale:**

The process of equalisation of opportunity should be illustrated. The objective is to demonstrate that with equal opportunity or access to education, training and with the provision of technical aids and support services, people with disabilities can contribute to their families and communities.

Even in developing countries, where services or access to them is not available to all in need, families and communities can “push the limits” of allowing children and adults with disabilities to experience as much of the world as possible.

**Examples:**

This is a typical image of a youth with a disability, sitting in a wheelchair.
People with Disabilities and the Media Working Together

This photo shows that even sitting in a wheelchair does not keep this youth from his love of soccer. This photo emphasizes the interests of children with disabilities have in common with all children, and deemphasizes the differences.
His “love of life” spirit is captivating and encourages people to feel at ease with and want to get to know him. It encourages a feeling of equality, not pity or sadness. It does not define a person as only a medical condition.
Note: Greeting cards, calendars, posters—as well as videos—can be developed with people with disabilities doing exciting, fun, creative activities.
1. **Low Cost, High Impact Activities.** The following are some approaches to public education identified by participants of the Workshop.

Many organizations of and for people with disabilities have very limited budgets. Still, educating the public and working with the media are priorities. What follows are several suggestions that cost little money and can still influence the media and general public.

Write a **letter to the editor** of a newspaper or submit an essay for a newspaper or magazine. One well-written and effective example follows from a writer in Malawi. This demonstrates a practical way not only to **approach journalists** and **get them involved** but also a way to **educate the public** with no money spent at all.
Disability and Communication
by Andrew Mphwina

Many people in the disability field believe that communication about people with disabilities has been traditionally "long on inspiration and short on issues."

In the media, communication about people with disabilities has on most times focused on either their helplessness or heroism.

Disabled people have often been characterized either as victims afflicted with disability, or as inspirational figures who "miraculously overcome" their disabilities. Such characterizations, while seemingly heart warming, are seen by most persons with disabilities as patronizing and demeaning.

What is more, such constant focus on either in-capacitation or super-achievement misses the opportunity to bring public attention to the real issues facing people, with disabilities such as fair housing, equal employment opportunity and accessibility.

What are the concerns?

There are three main areas about traditional media portrayals of people who have disabilities.

There has been too much emphasis on people with disabilities as human interest material. There are two kinds of stories on this. First are the heartwarming tales of disabled people who overcome their disabilities. In such stories the disabled person is often portrayed as being constantly good humoured, patient and a wonderful inspiration to all.

The other kind of story is where disabled people are characterized as sad victims, confined to beds or wheelchairs dependent on the goodwill of others for every accomplishment in their lives eliciting pity or charity or both.

Most stories do not cover issues. Since, for a long time disability reporting has focused on individual human interest stories, readers, listeners and others have not been exposed to some of the compelling issues facing the disabled community.

The language of traditional disability reporting is often offensive. There is a tendency for those writing about people with disability to give them added emotional baggage of sensationalized words and phrases describing their disabling conditions.

It is done so much and so unconsciously that it creeps into the ordinary language used to refer to disability conditions for instance, terms like victim, afflicted, wheel-chair-bound and others.

Traditional versus progressive stories

Traditional stories tend to show people with disabilities as malfunctioning in some ways. While often praising the subject of a story for his or her achievement, such stories tend to imply that the source of any problems lies within the individual and solutions are possible if the disabled person tries hard.

Traditional stories focus on special situations fail to acknowledge that disability issues directly or indirectly affect at least a good part of the community. This category can be subdivided into two aspects: medical and social.
Medical aspect

On this emphasis is on physical disability as illness. The individual is portrayed as passive and dependent on health professionals and other well meaning people.

Social aspect

The person with a disability is portrayed as a disadvantaged client who looks to the state or society for economic support, which is considered a gift and not a right.

Progressive stories portray disabled people as participating in and contributing to society. They make clear that the major disabling aspect of a person's disability is society's inability to adapt its physical, social or occupational environment and its attitude to those who are different.

They make the point that civil rights issues facing the disabled community in fact affect the entire nation. This category can be said to have two models.

1. Depicts people with disabilities as members of the community with clear rights and legitimate grievances.

2. Shows a person with a disability as a multifaceted individual whose disability is just one personal trait among many. No undue attention is paid to the disability the individual is portrayed the same as people without disabilities.

Implication

What role can rehabilitation professionals take in this emphasis on communication about disability?

As providers of service to people with disabilities they have to be concerned with what happens to people when they leave their programmes.

They can give them the best physical therapy, occupational therapy, vocational training and much more but if they can't find a job, enter a public building and generally contribute to the life of their communities of what value is it? We have an obligation to change community attitudes or perceptions, this is every bit as much our responsibility as "pure" rehabilitation. We have not done our job unless we ourselves communicate accurately and ethically about people who have disabilities, and encourage others to do so as well in an effort to help bring about true equality, dignity and independence for our clients.


The following activities are low cost and with potential to have high impact. They have already been used in Africa and other parts of the world.

- Issue a Press Release where there is a link with disability to events, such as a peace march, International Women's Day celebration, or a national holiday.

- Socialize with journalists and in this way enlist them as allies to assist in planning strategies as well as in actual media production if possible.
People with Disabilities and the Media Working Together

- Try to identify journalists with disabilities or those with a family member who is disabled.
- Speak at block associations and at community meetings.
- Speak at churches, mosques and other religious gatherings.
- Borrow national and international videos and show them to others along with discussion following the viewing.
- Aim to get publicity for all persons with disabilities, not just your own project or organizations. Another organization might do the same for you.
- The ILO has produced a series of Training Videos on “Integration—Let’s make it happen,” for agricultural extension workers, vocationa instructors, job placement officers, and community development/social workers.
- For suggestions of international videos about disability issues, contact VIDEOservices, 4424 Forman Avenue, Toluca Lake, CA, 91602, USA.
- An Audio-Visual Kit on Childhood Disability was recently produced by the Rehabilitation International/UNICEF Technical Support Programme. On the following page are some suggestions from that Kit on how to influence others to integrate disability into various mainstream media and activities. Talk to people working in these sectors and those who produce media materials for them.

Illustration from RI/UNICEF Audio-Visual Kit on Childhood Disability
Media Component

All UNICEF programmes have a Media Component. In addition, programme communications is one of the backbones for getting messages out to the target audiences. The media efforts of each programme section and the activities of the Programme Communications section can include information for or about children and adults with disabilities. When media products are commissioned or produced in-house, it is recommended that children and adults who are disabled are integrated in them in a natural, positive way. The images should be respectful, nurturing and active.

What follows are some suggestions for consideration as well as examples of activities already carried out with assistance from various UNICEF offices.

In any product commissioned by programme communications or any other section, include some elements about people who are disabled. A poster of a group of people should include a few children or adults with disabilities; a series of pamphlets on Early Childhood Development and parenting should include some information on parenting of children who are disabled; a photography project should include some people who are disabled; a puppet show should show a puppet with a disability; official speeches and press releases should include information about UNICEF’s efforts to improve the quality of life for children who are disabled—through early detection and rehabilitation.

Education Programmes. Any activity either for or about children’s education is a perfect entry point for information about children who are disabled. For example, children’s storybooks could be written about people who are disabled. A mother with a disability could be giving Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) to a child, a child with a disability could be one of many children being breastfed, a parent who is disabled could be taking his/her child for immunizations, children with and without disabilities could be portrayed eating a variety of foods rich in vitamin A and so on.

Health and Nutrition Programmes. For example, when producing material on Iodine Deficiency Disorder (IDD), the manner in which children and adults with cretinism are portrayed will make a great deal of difference with regard to the attitudes conveyed about people who have cretinism. Remember that we want to prevent the disability/disease, not the person. Their disability is only part of their existence.

Women’s Programmes. Similar to the above, any media activity for/about women should include women (and girls) who are disabled. Women are the most affected by the disability of a member of a family. In addition, girls and women who are disabled are frequently discriminated against even more than the general population.

Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances. Whether the group we are concerned about is children in armed conflict, abused children or street children—children who are disabled will comprise a substantial number within these groups and should be included in all programme activities. The disabilities will range from learning problems due to environmental deprivation or disrupted schooling, psycho-social trauma, or amputations and numerous other physical disabilities as a result of war.
Women and Disability Kit

The Joint United Nations Information Committee/Non-Governmental Organization Programme on Women (JUNIC/NGO) has recently completed a kit on Women and Disabilities which is an excellent resource. The kit was produced with the support of, and can be obtained from the RI/UNICEF Technical Support Programme, UNICEF House, H-8F, UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

Many programmes deal with national television and radio programmes, both of which are becoming increasingly accessible to more people. When working to support the national media capabilities within a country, one could suggest:

1) Integrating ideas about disability into existing dramas, soap operas, documentaries, fillers, news, comedies, and so forth. A Workshop on Awareness Creation, with people who are disabled as resource persons, could be held with producers, directors and scriptwriters, to ensure accurate and sensitive representation for people who are disabled.

2) Many country programmes are helping to build capacity of children's TV and radio programming in their countries. Training courses and other "software" assistance is given. This indeed is an area of great potential impact. First, there is the possibility to prevent negative stereotypic attitudes from forming. Second, children who are disabled could be exposed to positive role models that adults with disabilities never had. Third, numerous Child-to-Child activities could be introduced. It would be optimal to find someone who has experience both in the area of disability as well as children's media to assist and guide the production. Of utmost importance, however, is the introduction of any "production team" to local children and adults with disabilities.

These activities have been tried and have been found to be successful in UNICEF Field Offices.

From Chapter 8, Integrating Childhood Disability Messages Into Media Activities, Childhood Disability Communications Kit: An Audio-Visual Supplement to the UNICEF Programme Guidelines on Childhood Disability.

One final suggestion which has been used by many around the world since 1982 is to distribute, if possible, the U.N. Guidelines on Improving Communications about People with Disabilities. These Guidelines have been used as is, translated and adapted. It has been found to be a vehicle of "status" when advocating with governments and with media. It is truly low cost with high impact. What follows is an updated, simplified version that can be shared with organizations, journalists and media producers. They can also be translated and be made culture-sensitive.
Improving Communications about People with Disabilities

Recommendations of a United Nations Seminar
Sample Tools for Low Cost, High Impact Activities

The following is a condensed version of Guidelines for the Mass Media adopted by a United Nations Experts Meeting in 1982. These Guidelines were reviewed by mass media and disability specialists in 77 countries.

A. Show or describe people with disabilities in the same everyday situations other people experience: at home, at work, at school, at leisure, etc.

The photograph at right of the Tanzanian woman is from the book, Women and Disability by Esther Boylan, and is used to illustrate the section on "Taking Control." It is part of the Women and World Development Series, available from Zed Books Ltd., 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, U.K.
B. If the particular disability is described, use factual, neutral terms, not emotional judgements. E.g., "uses a wheelchair, not "is wheelchair-bound," "is blind" not "is denied light," "cannot hear" or "is deaf," not "lives in silence", "person with epilepsy", not "victim of epileptic fits," "has an intellectual impairment or developmental delay" or "is a slow-learner", not "is retarded".

C. Do not present people with disabilities as burdens on their parents or society. This is a negative stereotype. Instead, show that with education, training and community awareness, people with disabilities can contribute to their communities to the same degree as other citizens.

D. Other stereotypes and myths to avoid are: presenting disabled people as inherently good or evil due to their disability. People with disabilities have the same range of moods, interests, talents, skills, and behaviour as the rest of the population. They should be portrayed as having the same complexity of personality and experience as other people of similar age and situation.

E. Present the situation of people with disabilities as a disadvantaged sector of society, similar to women, or illiterate people, or street children, or other minority group perceived as second-class citizens. Most problems experienced by people with disabilities are not due to the disability itself but due to the negative attitudes toward difference and low expectations that all societies have of disabled people.
2. Use of Examples of Negative and Positive Press Coverage

A Tool for Training Journalists and other Media Representatives

The following is an example of two different ways a news story about an income producing project for people with disabilities can be handled by the mass media.

The first treatment reinforces negative stereotypes about people with disabilities and has strong overtones of charity and condescension.

The second treatment, which presents the information in a more positive light, treats people with disabilities as equal members of society trying to earn a livelihood.

You can use these examples during media workshops or seminars and when briefing journalists or producers.
The Facts:

A group of adults with different disabilities has begun a workshop to produce and sell jewelry. All of the workers need the income from sales to support themselves and family members, but there is not much business right now. The workshop needs to build a reputation for good products, increase sales and thereby grow to support all its workers and train others.

Negative Example of Press Coverage

Crippled and Deaf-Dumb Make Jewelry in Spite of Handicaps

About 30 crippled, deaf, dumb and blinded poor people have started a jewelry workshop on the east side of Harambee Plaza. They can't walk or sit straight, most of them, and many used to be beggars.

Now, with all their problems and miseries between them, they will try to ignore their ugly fates and fashion something beautiful. With utmost patience and cheerfulness, they sit all day long putting together necklaces, bracelets and rings to appeal to passersby. To help them feel worthy, perhaps some charitable people would buy these trinkets.

What's Wrong:

"Crippled" and "Deaf-Dumb" are out of date, derogatory terms; "In Spite of Handicap" is patronising and emotional.

This paragraph describes the workshop in pitiful terms, placing all the emphasis on physical conditions, rather than on the workers’ abilities and plans. The necessary skills to produce jewelry do not include walking or sitting upright.

This sentence has no facts; it merely reveals the writer's prejudiced assumption that life with a disability is constant misery and a tragedy. It describes disabled people as completely different from others—isolating them from humanity. People with disabilities are no more patient and cheerful (or impatient and irritable) than anyone else. They have the same range of skills, abilities and emotions as people without disabilities—just fewer chances to prove it.
New Jewelry Shop Opened by Workers with Disabilities

About 30 adults with various disabilities—paraplegia, blindness, deafness, amputees—have started a jewelry workshop on the east side of Harambee Plaza. Following six months training in necessary skills, they produce 30-50 original necklaces, bracelets and rings a day in modern and traditional styles.

Mr. Sharif Mousaka, workshop manager, who uses a wheelchair, said, "Some of us used to be beggars and we are now trained to support ourselves and help support other family members. Our jewelry is well-designed, beautifully made and competes with other products on the market." Mr. Mousaka also said any customer who brings a copy of this story will be given a discount on the first purchase.

What’s Right:

Headline emphasises new project started by people; secondary emphasis on disability.

Gives the facts most readers would want to know but does not emotionalise or dramatise the disabling conditions.

Establishes the workers as responsible adults who have concentrated on obtaining skills.

Describes a business in business terms, not in terms of a charity venture.

Interviews and quotes the manager with a disability as any other manager of a business would be in a news story.

Gives the manager the space to put across his point of view, not the journalist’s.

Reassures the reader that the products are professionally made and provides an incentive for the reader to become a customer.

The negative example of a newspaper or newsletter story is typical of what happens the world over when there is no communication between the disability community and journalists. The journalist assumes that a disability story should be coated with sugar, pity and an urge toward charity.

The positive example is what can result if the disability community initiates regular communication with journalists and the media about its goals, objectives and the differences in positive and negative presentations.
3. Use of Media Workshops and Seminars

One of the most effective ways of reaching and educating people working in the media is to hold a Media Workshop or Seminar on the topic of disability. This activity has effectively taken place in dozens of countries around the world. One basic rationale for this approach is that it will often be the first true interpersonal contact that media people have with active people who are disabled. This in itself is one of the best and most direct ways of influencing people's attitudes.

Some suggestions for holding a media workshop include:

- One full day is usually best to allow for presentations and active participation of all participants.

People with disabilities should be key presenters along with one or two “allies” in the media community.

- Media people enjoy reviewing media. Try whenever possible to screen a few national or international videos, listen to radio spots, review a few posters.

- Review of media should be of production quality (not synonymous with high cost) as well as using the U.N. or Adapted Media Guidelines also in this book.
- Distribute resource material—the U.N. or Adapted Guidelines, model positive and negative press coverage (see page 32), sample affirming photos, and resource names and organizations.

- If possible, break up for simple group work. The assignments should be creative, not more working on guidelines. Examples might include each group selling an entertaining message on integration—one in a poster, another in a short radio drama, the third in a one minute public service announcement for TV. Or each group could design a humorous message about people who are disabled as providers of services—one for an adult audience, one for children and another for employers. Use either traditional or modern media.

- Assure that speakers, participants and group assignments are gender sensitive, culturally relevant, practical and entertaining.

Sometimes a seminar to introduce the importance of working to change attitudes about disability is an effective way to begin a national public education campaign. A seminar is aimed at a larger audience than a workshop and has the broader objectives of public education and bringing groups together which can effect change.

The main groups or sectors of society which can, by working together, bring about a climate of acceptance of people with disabilities are representatives, women and men, of:

- government
- organizations of and for disabled people
- mass media
- employers

Each of these groups has a primary influence on the perception of people with disabilities and their acceptance by society.

Sample Program for Disability and Mass Media Seminar (one or two days)

1. Introduction of topic by person with disability who is also experienced in some aspect of mass media (television,
APPROACHES TO PUBLIC EDUCATION

theatre, radio, author, etc.)
a. example of positive presentation on disability issues or life with a disability (film, play, etc.)
b. negative example
c. discussion of both, led by representatives of main groups in attendance

2. Discussion of language and terminology, through a panel of representatives of main groups
   a. examples of positive terminology
   b. examples of demeaning, negative words (use examples from legislation, employment regulations, and current newspapers, films, comic strips, theatre, television programs, radio)

3. International Perspectives
   a. If possible, bring a representative who can report on results of public education initiatives in other countries
   b. Introduce United Nations Guidelines on Improving Communications about People with Disabilities and suggest national initiatives to implement guidelines

Second half day or second day

4. Break into groups according to media to develop strategies for change:
   a. Press and periodicals
   b. Television
   c. Radio
   d. Small or traditional media, e.g. theatre, posters, books
   e. Advertising (if relevant)

   Each group should be co-chaired by a disabled and non-disabled expert on the particular issue.

   If time allows, each group should be given positive and negative examples of media already produced.

5. Closing: All groups should come together for a summing up and plan for future action.
4. Use of an On-Going National Media and Disability Committee

In several countries an on-going National Media and Disability Committee has been effective in cultivating a working relationship between the mass media and disability communities. A permanent committee, as opposed to ad hoc activities, has the advantage of an overall strategy which can be monitored and developed year by year. Examples of activities National Committees are carrying out are:

1) Developing a theme each year, e.g., accessibility. The Committee can then encourage or sponsor:
   - a film/video on access
   - development of traditional or film media on this topic for rural communities
   - public service announcements for radio and television
   - brochures for employers on practical tips on accessibility of the workplace

2) Sponsoring a disability Film/Video Festival. A Festival can: educate and create awareness of the public, help develop media expertise among the disability community, increase disability expertise of media professionals and provide incentives (through awards) to media producers to develop more material promoting creative and positive approaches to disability issues.

First Disability Film/Video Festival in Africa: a case study

In September 1992 an international Film and Video Festival was held in Nairobi in association with Rehabilitation International's 17th World Congress.

- More than 70 films and videos entered by 12 countries and three UN agencies; about 3/4 of the films concerned adults with disabilities and 1/4 focused on children;
Judges from Africa, Europe, North and South America and Asia and the Pacific evaluated the films. The seven judges from Kenya were all high level media professionals; two of them were involved in disability issues. The judges from other countries were disabled and non-disabled persons working in the disability field, most of whom had some direct experience in producing media. It was an intense educational interchange as the media and disability experts taught each other the fine points of their different perspectives on what makes a superior film/video.

The videos were produced by groups varying from high-budgeted television crews to rehabilitation service agencies in developing countries. The objectives of the materials also ranged widely. The jury selected four categories for awards so that the films could be fairly grouped. The categories were videos/films which conveyed:

1) people with disabilities as positive role models for disabled children or adults;
2) a change of attitude about people with disabilities;
3) practical information about disability and rehabilitation services; and
4) community-based services and education.

As there were many excellent entries, one first prize and two runners-up were awarded in each category. In order that the jury could evaluate the large number of entries during the four days allotted for its work, a “short-listing” method was adopted. Each film was shown for seven minutes, after which a vote was taken to determine if that entry had the potential for an award. If the majority voted “yes”, the entry was set aside for full viewing. In this way, two days were spent in “short-listing” and two days in evaluating potential winners.

Judging criteria had been developed prior to the Festival and circulated to each judge. The criteria follow.
Content Criteria

1) **Positive portrayal** of people with disabilities: whether the film/video is focused on adults or children, the portrayal of disabled persons should be as multidimensional and active as non-disabled persons. Disabled adults should be shown speaking for themselves not merely being spoken about. Disabled children should be portrayed as having a range of interests and abilities paralleling those of non-disabled children.

2) **Practical Information:** In many cases, an objective of the film will be to demystify disability or to clarify a disability issue for the public or a particular audience. This is best accomplished by conveying practical information, not by asserting platitudes or admonitions. For example, if a film is explaining accessibility, a range of solutions should be shown, not just the problems caused by inaccessibility. In general, a good ratio is that 10% of the film should present the problem or situation and 90% should be devoted to exploring solutions or possibilities.

3) **Does the script:** enhance the visuals, maintain viewer interest, convey a balance of practical information and motivating messages? Is the level of **language** appropriate to the intended audience?

4) **Rights not Charity:** If an objective of the film is to motivate the viewing audience toward action, the rationale should be that disabled persons, representing at least 10% of the world's population, have the same right to education, services, employment, housing, transport, etc. as other citizens. The motivation should not just be an emotional appeal to the feelings of the audience, such as charity, pity etc., as this implies that disabled persons' access to society depends upon the attitude of non-disabled people.

5) **Stereotypes and mythology** should not be reinforced. Whether a disability film originates from a developed or developing country, there are often stereotypes, misinformation and mythology imbedded in its verbal and visual messages.

Examples are:
- If a film features a disabled person who has achieved success in an area of endeavor such as sports, employment, the performing arts, etc., this person should not be presented as a superhuman role model for all disabled persons. This is a stereotype often put forward in the media and the underlying message is, "if this person can do that, why not you?" Disabled people have the same range of talents as other people; the problems of access and attitudes faced by the disabled population as a whole are separate issues.
- Disability is caused by a variety of factors, but it is misinformation and mythology to suggest that these causes include: punishment for behavior of the parents, retribution for a past life, or the result of encountering a disabled person or a disturbing incident during pregnancy.
- It is also mythology to suggest that a person with one impairment, e.g. blindness, is automatically compensated by superiority in another area, e.g. acute hearing or extraordinary memory. It is accurate that some individuals may develop remaining senses to a higher degree than others but mythology to suggest that this is a divine redistribution of skills and talents.
### Production Criteria

6) **Length**: Is the film an appropriate length in relation to its objectives?

7) **Direction**: Is there enough variety and creativity (camera angles, shifts in perspective) to maintain viewer interest or is it just “talking heads”? 

8) **Sound**: Is the sound production quality sufficient so that all spoken messages can be heard clearly and at a speed or cadence which is easily understood?

9) **Music**: If there is music accompanying the film, is it intrusive; does it encourage exaggerated emotion; or does it underscore the messages?

10) **Subtitles**: If the film is subtitled, are the words large enough and on the screen long enough to be read and understood?

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**Evaluation**: Following the Festival, the judges held a final meeting to evaluate procedures and make recommendations for future festivals. They agreed that:

1) The **mix** of media and disability experts had been valuable for both groups;

2) If possible, the jury should meet **prior** to a public festival (or conference or congress) and decide the winning entries **without** the pressures and distractions of other events. Then the winning films, decided on beforehand, could be given special showing times and promotions during the Festival.

3) The **categories** for entries should be established beforehand so that producers enter material into categories they select. The judges found it difficult to always agree on how to categorize an entry; and

4) A **release** for showing on television should be obtained from the producer of each film/video at the time of entry. This way, the winners could be shown to a much wider audience than festival participants.
5. Use of Case Studies of Public Education Strategies

As mentioned in the Introduction, this Guide is the direct result of a day-long ILO/RI Workshop on Mass Media and Disability in Africa. At this Workshop there were 13 case studies presented (see Agenda in Appendix 1). Three of the case studies and they are presented here as samples of different approaches a project or organization might choose to take.

a. Working with the Mass Media in Kenya: A Three Year Experiment

In anticipation of Rehabilitation International’s first World Congress in Africa, the Congress Organizing Committee decided to use the event to interest Kenya’s mass media professionals in disability issues and in improving their knowledge and terminology about people with disabilities. The Committee developed a comprehensive media strategy in 1990, working towards the Congress, held September 7-11, 1992 in Nairobi, with post-Congress follow-up activities.

This three year strategy is an example of how a major public event in Africa was used as a “magnet” to attract the attention of the mass media and the public to disability issues.

The following summary of the steps of the strategy is drawn mainly from information provided by Mr. Oscar Beauttah, Chairman of the Publicity Committee for the Congress.
Pre-Congress Activities

1990:
Establishment of Sub-committee on publicity, development of Congress logo, poster and plans to approach key figures in Kenyan national newspapers, television and radio

1991:
Consultation with mass media and disability expert, Barbara Kolucki, on how to develop an effective seminar for Kenyan journalists (print and broadcast) on disability coverage.

- Utilization of "National Days" to promote inclusion of disability themes in public events. For example, the Super Disken Band, composed of musicians with disabilities, performed on "Madaraka Day" in the presence of 70,000 people and the President of Kenya.

- Over 200 people with disabilities marched the streets of Nairobi in an "Awareness Walk", covering well-known landmarks such as the Parliament, City Hall, the Railway Station. They were accompanied by a band, the Congress banner and people carrying banners in support of persons with disabilities.

- A two-day Media Workshop was held, involving 35 journalists representing at least 20 media outlets, including electronic and print media. The objective was to acquaint Kenya's journalists with the modern concepts of disability as a social development issue and to equip them with positive terminology to describe people with disabilities and information to portray their situation in Africa. Speakers were invited from throughout the disability and rehabilitation field.

The Workshop, opened by the Minister of Health, was considered quite successful as it was followed by immense media coverage, ranging from profiles of people with disabilities to in-depth articles covering education, business, leisure and sports.

- The Publicity Committee lined up 17 features for the daily press and other periodicals, of which 11 were used.
1991–1992:

- The Publicity Sub-Committee leaders met with representatives of the two Kenyan television stations, Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation and Kenya Television Network. This resulted in greatly improved coverage about disabled people on current affairs programs, magazine programs, news following press conferences and talk shows. The stations even began airing films featuring people with disabilities. KBC began a series called “Twajeweza” (We Are Able), a 13 episode program featuring a child born with a disability who grows up to be a useful member of the family.

- On radio numerous programmes were produced in 12 Kenyan languages about people with disabilities, organizations of people with disabilities and organizers of the Congress.

1992:

- The Nairobi Ramps Project was given an official launch early in 1992 by the Nairobi City Commission. A large number of key pedestrian routes through the center of Nairobi were given curb-cuts for use by people with wheelchairs. This project was given wide publicity in electronic and print media.

- A less successful initiative was the preparation of supplements on disability issues for newspapers and periodicals. Only one of the daily papers used the material and one appeared in an issue of the Weekly Review.

During the Congress:

For the 10 days of Congress events, a comprehensive Press Center was provided at the Kenyatta International Conference Center. The Press Center staff handled:

- Press liaison
- Staffing information desks
- Provision of photographs of Congress speakers and participants
- The Congress Daily Bulletin (news and feature stories on speakers and events)
- Provision of speakers' papers to journalists
- Production of a Souvenir Programme.
b) Public Education Campaigns on the Employment of People with Disabilities

Two ILO Projects on Employment of People with Disabilities, in Kenya and Tanzania, include a very specific component on Public Education. ILO staff realized that people who are disabled would be truly integrated into competitive or self-employment if employers, families and people with disabilities had more positive attitudes. They realized that the projects and actions should go hand-in-hand with awareness raising, that one couldn't simply say, "Employ people who are disabled." Why should someone want to do this? Because as stated in a public service TV spot done in Zimbabwe by the ILO project Improved Livelihood for Disabled Women, "Women with disabilities get the job done."

In the Kenya project, efforts have focused on sensitizing people working in the mass media and in producing a video on attitudes as well as public service spots for TV. Both address the stereotypical attitudes and replace them with facts, pictures and first person testimonies. "My boss is disabled and he is wonderful." "My computer was repaired by someone who is disabled. She did a great job."

The video production in Kenya also involved ILO project staff working very closely with the production team at all stages of production—briefing, sensitization, script, shooting and post production editing. Though this was labour intensive, the investment was worth it. Future products will be better (and easier to develop) and, in the case of the Kenyan video, it won Second Prize at the 17th World Congress of Rehabilitation International Film Festival.

In the Tanzania project, a Media Committee was formed of representatives from the Tanzania Women's Media Association, representatives from the organizations of persons with disabilities and other media people. The Committee decided to concentrate more on rural rather than urban media activities which include:

1) Dramas that highlight issues of disability;
2) A travelling choir;
3) Competitions in primary schools to develop plays on disability themes;

4) Using project vehicles to attract attention. The vehicles have slogans and stop to discuss the project with passersby;

5) Project teams visiting rural sites accompanied by disabled persons' organizations.
6. When and Why to Use Certain Media

As previously stated, interpersonal contact is the best way of changing attitudes. Time spent and knowledge shared can be best achieved through friendships and intimacy. This one-to-one exchange, however, is not always possible. Therefore, it is necessary to reach people where they are and with whatever media is available and understandable to them.

How does one choose a medium? This depends on time, budget, target audience, access, etc. One basic recommendation, however, is that, to the extent possible, multi-media is best. Some of the most effective campaigns use a combination of big media (radio, TV, film) and small media (posters, dramas, brochures, music, etc.)

Another recommendation is to try to piggyback our messages onto existing media. This can include such things as having a few children who are disabled in a children’s TV show, a regular feature on some aspect of disability in the weekend newspaper, asking a famous song writer to include a song about “differences” on his or her next cassette, having a person who is disabled and active on a radio drama, printing a poster on employment where a few people with disability are included among employers and employees, etc. Organizations of and for people with disabilities can often use this as a strategy, particularly when they have limited finances.

It is often effective to choose a theme (e.g., learning what to do when you meet someone disabled) and then developing many media products on the same theme. In addition to documentation, it is important to remember that a message imbedded in something entertaining is usually of more interest to audiences. Just because a message “is good for them to know” isn’t enough of an argument. Also try simple storybooks, cartoons, soap operas, photo-novellas, t-shirts, carrying bags and billboards.

Remember that there are positive and negative reasons to develop certain media. Here are a few examples:

- In Senegal, a professional magazine called Solidarite was published for French-speaking African countries. It ran
from 1984-87 and was published by the West African Federation of Associations for the Advancement of Disabled Persons. The editor, Mr. Bamba Ndiaye and others felt that this was one of the best ways to network and pass on practical information on disability topics. They were right. Mr. Ndiaye also noted, however, that the effort was expensive (they published a competitive quality magazine), time intensive and it reached a limited audience. He said he would not give this type of magazine priority in a public education campaign—but—that the experience trained him and other people with disabilities in all aspects of publishing which was very useful.
A similar high-quality newsletter/magazine is published by the National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons, Ministry of Social Security, Mauritius. It contains a wide variety of articles about disability, training, services, international and national activities. This magazine does not, however, have to worry about being self-sustaining. It is adequately funded by the Government of Mauritius.

The ILO project, Improved Livelihood for Disabled women, has developed Roadshows in four of the five countries in which it is operating. The roadshows consist of a drama about some aspect of disability followed by a public debate on disability issues. The ILO project staff cited some points to consider when determining when, why and how to "get a drama on the road."

- It is most important to have a good script. The team should include proven writers and of course if the writer is not disabled, people with disabilities. Make sure it is entertaining.
- See how the drama forms part of the overall roadshow. Choose a venue and go there with actors and musicians.
- Check for electricity, lighting, a stage so that large groups can see and hear.
- On the day of the roadshow, introduce your project and the drama. Follow it up with a discussion moderated by a leader who is disabled.
- If possible, have the show run for two days. If it is a good drama, word will spread and people will come.

The ILO project is able to provide scripts to interested organizations. Scripts can be obtained by writing to the ILO for the following plays: Zimbabwe: "Jazzman Show—the Story of my Wife," by Cont Mhlanga, text in English and Shona; Zambia: "The Drums of Tomorrow," by Maxwell Tembo, text in English; Botswana: "Dineo," by Reetsenang Community Theatre Group, text in English; and Swaziland: "My Destiny," by Matiwane Manana, text in English and Siswati.
COUNT US IN

Poster from Improved Livelihood for Disabled Women: A Regional Promotional Programme for Southern African Countries, ILO Project based in Zimbabwe
As part of or separate from a road show, several organizations use mobile vans. This is particularly good if you want to get access to rural areas. In this way, people can see videos or films that are taken to them even if they don’t have access to radio or TV. The novelty nearly always attracts crowds, especially, as the ILO coordinator from Nigeria pointed out, “if you go in grand style—with drums and dances to attract people in a traditional way.” In addition, people travelling with the van can serve as a focal point for clarification, participatory evaluation and discussions—these things cannot be achieved by one-way media like radio and TV.

One the “down” side, vans break down, they use a lot of petrol, batteries and battery chargers are needed and in some countries it is dangerous to travel this way, especially at night.

Finally, some people argue that it is not worth the money to use TV and radio in countries where coverage is limited. This is a legitimate argument. However, satellites and electricity continue to make media available to greater masses each year. One can argue that now is the time to get in on the ground floor with our messages. If they reach only urban audiences today—at least they are reaching many decision makers. Now is the time when millions are being spent on “hardware” and where our messages that are entertaining as well as educational can become the “software”. Now is the time, before negative images begin to appear. Positive, life-affirming messages can assist in the formation of attitudes inclusive to-wards children and adults with disabilities.
7. The Importance of Research and Evaluation

Any campaign or media activity should have a research and evaluation component. This is important to ensure that our audience understands our message as well as to periodically check our successes. There is need for continuous feedback so that hopefully, as our efforts succeed, our strategies change to meet new needs.

Research needs to be done, whenever possible, prior to producing media materials. This can include everything from high cost surveys to low cost observation. Examples are:

- An **anthropological study** on existing knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) about disability.
- Informal **focus group** sessions with members of one's target audience to determine their questions about disability.
- **Interviews** with selected non-disabled people about their attitudes toward disability, reactions to existing media about disability and people with disabilities that they know.
- **Observations** of people, disabled and not, interacting. Or, observations of people who are disabled in various family and community activities.

Evaluation needs to be done, if possible, by some “formative testing,” before the media is sent for final production. Sample posters, drawings, roughly edited video clips, etc., can be shown to persons in the target audience to get feedback and determine if editing needs to be done.

After use, it is important to assess the impact of media products and activities on attitudes and behaviour toward people who are disabled. Again, if there is money available, a formal evaluation can be contracted. If not, a combination of informal interviews, focus group discussions and observation can be done. People can respond by writing, drawing, role playing, and so on.
Other activities, particularly Workshops, also need to be evaluated. A simple questionnaire can be designed and distributed at the end of a workshop (don't let people leave before they hand it in!). What follows is a sample questionnaire.

### 17th World Congress of Rehabilitation International

**Nairobi, Kenya**

**ILO/RI Workshop on**

**The Mass Media and Disability in Africa**

**Wednesday, 9 September 1992**

**EVALUATION**

1. Which presentations during the Workshop were most helpful? Why?

   What other topics should have been covered?

2. How effective were the co-chairpersons/facilitators?
   - ___ very effective
   - ___ satisfactory
   - ___ need improvement

3. How useful are the resource materials that were distributed?
   - ___ very useful
   - ___ satisfactory
   - ___ need improvement

4. How useful was the Workshop to you for your everyday work?
   - ___ very useful
   - ___ satisfactory
   - ___ not useful

5. To what degree were people with disabilities involved in the Workshop—for example, as co-chairpersons, presenters, participants?
   - ___ very involved in all aspects
   - ___ involved in some aspects
   - ___ not involved enough

6. What suggestions do you have for future workshops on mass media and disability?

   **Optional**

   Name ____________________________________________

   Organization ____________________________________________

   Address ____________________________________________

Another useful question to ask is: “How are you going to use the knowledge you have gained during the Workshop?”

In conclusion, research and evaluation will help ensure that time and effort spent on media efforts are cost effective and achieve results in terms of positive attitudes. It can help with fund raising. And it can add substance to our moral arguments about enhancing the lives of people who are disabled.
C. Lessons Learned

The ILO/RI workshop on the Media and Disability in Africa identified many lessons that have been learned during the workshop:

1. Changing attitudes is a dual process. It is not only important to change the attitudes of society, but it is equally important to address the attitudes of people with disabilities. As much as we design our media toward society, we should also gear our media towards people with disabilities.

2. People in the media have the same attitudes as the general public. They can, however, be educated, through workshops, by sitting on committees or judging film festivals, through letters to the editor and most importantly, through personal contact and interaction with people who are disabled.

3. Public Education should be a component of all our projects. It can be expensive but in the end it is well worth it. Our best community based programmes or national policies won’t be as effective as they can be if people’s attitudes haven’t changed.
4. A lot of good public education work has already been
done in Africa and in other parts of the world. We need to
network, share mistakes and successes, and build on what al-
ready exists.

5. More publicity should be focused on social issues,
everyday life, education and business rather than on solely
super-success stories or misery and failure.

6. Integration should begin in the team of any public educa-
tion campaign. We should be training persons with disabilities to
be producers of their own media materials.

7. We have to think more creatively when we hear that
"there are so many non-disabled people—we can’t pay attention
to people with disabilities.” (It is helpful to point out that
approximately 10% of any population is born with or acquires a
disability; and that including family members, colleagues and
other relationships, approximately 25% of the population is
directly affected by the presence of disability.) We need to
develop media and strategies to show how survival issues can
improve when all in a family and community, disabled and not,
actively participate and contribute to development.

8. When inviting media representatives/professionals,
especially video or photography, it is best if they come ahead
and learn about your group as well as personally meet and
interact with group members. In this way, the media will come
back with usually a “softer”, more natural approach as well as
conform to the true message of empowerment that the group
wants to communicate.
Session 1: 8:30 a.m. — 10:45 a.m.

Welcome, Opening Remarks – Mr. J.K.E. Chemoiywa, Commissioner of Social Services, Ministry of Culture and Social Service

Introduction: Workshop Objectives and Workplan
Lainah Magama, Zimbabwe, Co-Chair
Barbara Kolucki, Mozambique, Co-Chair

Why RI is interested in the use of media – Barbara Duncan, RI, New York

Why the ILO supports the use of media in technical co-operation projects in the field of disability – Willi Momm, ILO Geneva

Planning and developing media as an integral component of ILO projects. Examples:

- Kenya
  Alex Kungu, National Expert
- Tanzania
  Bernard Lyamba, National Project Manager
- Nigeria
  Funmi Togonu-Bickersteth, National Project Manager
- Angola
  Clarita de Machado, Chief Technical Advisor
- Malawi
  J.J.A. Njala, National CBR Programme Co-ordinator, Malawi Council for the Handicapped

Discussion

Session 2: 11:00 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

Planning and developing media as part of advocacy and organizational outreach by organizations of disabled persons. Examples:

- West Africa
  Bamba Ndiaye, Solidarite Magazine, Former Editor
- Zimbabwe
  Rangarirai Mupindu, National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCDPZ)
- Uganda
  National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) - Eliphaz Mazima
- Tanzania
  Tanzania Association of the Physically Disabled (CHAWATA), Lunanilo Msigwa

Discussion

Session 3: 1:30 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.

Examples of the use of media from an ILO Comprehensive Promotional Project - “Improved Livelihood for Disabled Women” Sub-Regional Programme for Southern Africa - Irene Gross-Herzog, Programme Co-ordinator and Lainah Magama, National Project Co-ordinator, Zimbabwe.

Discussion
Other examples of the use of media in Africa:

Mauritius  National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons – Azziz Bankur, Rehabilitation Officer, Ministry of Social Security

Kenya  Kenya Institute of Special Education – Kurt Kristensen, Adviser

Kenya  Publicity Sub-Committee of the RI World Congress – Oscar Beautah, Chairman

Session 4:  3:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

What lessons can we draw from our experiences with the use of the media?

What are the essential elements for an effective media strategy or campaign?

Summary and Workshop Wrap-up – Co-chairs
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APPENDIX B

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Appendix C

List of Resources

- **Improving Communications about People with Disabilities**, Recommendations of a United Nations Seminar, 8-10 June 1982, and available from United Nations, Division for Economic and Social Information, Department of Public Information, New York, NY 10017, USA.

- **Developing Strategies for Communications about Disability: Experiences in the U.S., Hong Kong, India and Pakistan**, Barbara Kolucki. Monograph No. 47 in the World Rehabilitation Fund International Exchange of Information in Rehabilitation Series, available for US$5 from University of New Hampshire, IEEIR Project, Institute on Disability, 6 Hood House, Durham, New Hampshire 03824-3577, USA.

- **Sharing the Street: Activities for ALL Children**, Barbara Kolucki. Children's Television Workshop, Community Education Services, One Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023, USA.

- **Child-to-Child**, University of London Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL, U.K.


- **Preventive Health: Can We Improve Our Communications about People with Disabilities**, by Rina Gill. Compares positive and negative portrayals of people with a disability in Public Service Health Advertisements. Available from UNICEF-Nepal, P.O. 1187, Kathmandu, Nepal.

- Various **public education materials** are available from The National Easter Seal Society, 70 East Lake Street, Chicago, IL 60601, USA.

- **VIDEOServices Newsletter**, a focal point for information about how to improve the image of people with disabilities and disability issues throughout the mass media worldwide. It reports on films, videos, the print media, radio and television programming concerning disability and the people who are producing and influencing these products. Available from: VIDEOServices, 4424 Forman Avenue, Toluca Lake, CA 91602, USA.

- **Training for Integration and Participation (TIP)** Videos for agricultural extension workers, social workers, vocational instructors, and placement officers, available from the International Labour Organization, CH 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland.

- **Training for Integration and Participation (TIP)** Manual for conducting sensitization courses on integration and disability. Available from the ILO, address above.

- **Proceedings of Rehabilitation International 17th World Congress**, held September 1992 in Nairobi, Kenya. Available from Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya, P.O. Box 467, Nairobi, Kenya.