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## **'The International Disability Rights Movement'**

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Its really good to be here. I'm going to talk for a bit and I really think we need to have discussion around it because there's a lot to take in. I've been involved with the International Disability Movement now for over twenty year and I don't know it all so I've given you a quick breakdown of what I know. I'm going to start in about the mid-1960's when there was no really movement anywhere and by movement I mean there was no organised movement. There were probably one or two radical disabled people but they neither disabled as a rights issue or the dear old social model which you all know so well had not reared its head. There was if anything really pressure was coming from the major both national and international organisations of single impairments. That was the world federation of the deaf and the international federation of the blind. But in America as many of you will know, what started in 1967, the beginnings, the stirrings of disabled people demanding the mainstream, demanding to be part of regular society and that was when Ed Roberts and unknown to him, four other disabled people applied for courses at the University of California in Berkeley and because of the level of their impairments they had to stay in the hospital wing but the University of Berkeley was one of the very few universities that would accept disabled students at all and certainly not those like Ed who were required to be on respirators. Anyway Ed and four others, known as the rolling quads, broke into university of Berkeley and they had a great time. They did their degrees and they found it not very nice having to go back to the hospital quarters but as you can imagine the soon made those open to all comers at all times and the hospital rules went by the board. But they realised as they were coming to the end before they graduated that what on earth was going to happen to them afterwards because they were used to being part of the mainstream community. And so they got together and decided to

think up ways of actually changing the society that they lived in. This was the first time really that we know of disabled people realising that what they needed wasn't special privileges, wasn't special services but was actually to change society itself. We'd had a lot of people who'd come home from wars of course, disabled people, who were fighting the system and didn't like the services that they were getting but they were accepting that they had to be different, they had to be separate, they had to be special. But these rolling quads decided that they weren't going to be and this was the birth of the first centre for independent living. Their first meeting was in 1968, by 1971 there were 144 centres for independent living throughout America, it was wild fire, it just spread. And they were very successful. There were three basic premise by which these centres were run. One that they had to be led by disabled people. They were run, staffed by disabled people. They must cover all impairments. So it wasn't just people in wheelchairs. Everybody, including people with learning difficulties and mental health problems. And its objective was for social change. Those were quite, well very radical ideas but the social change was about environmental, architectural and access change rather than, at that stage, understanding that you had to go up different layers. You must go up to the legislative layer. This was in the early 70's. And then in the middle of the 70's the United Nations, who had of course produced the universal declaration of human rights and disabled people are human too, despite everybody else's ideas. And they had produced in 1975 a declaration on the rights of disabled people that was very rehabilitation orientated. I looked at them the other day and I decided that I didn't want to know about them, I throw them away. But the UN decided in the middle of the 70's that it was going to have an international year on the rights of disabled people so there was this beginning of understanding that disabled people were a group, a specific group, that they would need special support from the United Nations as a group that should be looked. But of course the UN like everybody else was still only seeing us in terms special services, special provision, special people. And the World Federation of the Deaf and the International Federation of the Blind were really not involved in any of thing because they were all very busy looking at their own services for their own group. But there was an international organisation called

Rehabilitation International which was mostly made up of rehabilitation professionals of one sort or another. There were one or two leading disabled people who were involved with RI, notably Ben Linqvist, who is now the special raconteur for the UN standard rules on the equalisation of opportunities for disabled people and those few, really a few, a handful, were trying to get RI to listen to the voice of disabled people. He was being singularly unsuccessful, which is not surprising. And in 1980 RI had one of their world congresses in Winnipeg in Canada. 1980, we've had ten years of the CIL movement all across America. Things are really happening. Of course it had gone over the border into Canada. It was not operating as successfully the CIL movement in Canada but disabled people were coming together. They were understanding that they needed to organise themselves and to make changes themselves and it could no longer wait for other people to do it for them. I don't know why RI chose Winnipeg, it was a bad choice, from their perspective but because of the things that people like Ben had been saying they invited some disabled people from all over the world. They invited about, the figures depends which book you read, either 200 or 300, so lets take 250, it doesn't really matter, 2 to 300 disabled people were invited. The rest of the conference was 3000 non disabled people, heavily professional, gaining, certainly the one's that came from this country, dear old Alf Morris was there and the then head of RADAR and all those nice important people were there. But luckily for us there were also people like Vic Finklestein and Stephen Bradshaw were in Winnipeg. They were invited but there was also and this was much more important really, for the international movement, there were disabled people who came from the developing countries. There was R? ley from Singapore and Joshua Malingo from Zimbabwe. These people whose life experience had been horrendous in terms of fighting for life let alone for inclusion in society and they came not really, they had no idea that what they had personally been through was an experience that was shared throughout the world. They had thought that their experience was so awful that they couldn't possibly, other people couldn't have the same experience because they would have done something about it or the world would have done something about it. And when they met the disabled movement in Winnipeg, which was very small but it was

strong, very strong, arranged a barbecue for the first evening of this RI conference. I wish I'd been there, I wasn't unfortunately but everybody met, drank a lot and discovered for the first time this shared commonality of oppression and it was a very, very emotional time but it was once of those times when history was really made and as a result of that barbecue they decided to go to the council of RI and demand that they had the substantial voice in the decisions that were being made. And so they next day they did. They marched into RI and the big plenary session they went up and said we demand that we are the people you are talking about, we must have a substantial voice in what you're saying and the council said to them sorry we've got our structures, we are going to stick to our structures, we know best, go away. So they did, they actual, all two hundred of them plus one or two others walked out of the conference and they never went back and they held their own conference in the hotel and they had workshops and they had, they issued a daily paper saying which stupid ass was the biggest stupid ass from the RI and they had a tremendous time really analysing where they were all coming from, what the barriers for their inclusion really were and how they could over come them. And by the end of the week they had made a major decision. One that they had to set up an international body of disabled people, which was going to only look at the establishment of rights and equalisation opportunities for disabled people. This is very important. It was not about getting services. It was not about supporting services or specialisation at all, things like sheltered employment or anything like that. It was purely and simply as an organisation which reflected the voice of disabled people and supported rights and equalisation of opportunities. Each of the disabled people were told to go home and set up their own national organisations. Vic and Stephen came back and set up the British Council of Organisations for Disabled People. Joshua went back and set up the National Council of Disabled People of Zimbabwe. Others went back to their countries and there were forty. And then in 1981 in Singapore they met again and Disabled People's International was founded. And Disabled People's International has remained an organisation which purely and simply is focused on rights and equalisation of opportunities it does not provide services, it is cross impairment, it has national assemblies now in

120 countries, over 120 I should think. Some of them are good, some of them are bad, some of them change, some of them are good one year and some of them are bad the next year. It's the whole idea of coherence in a movement, in a political movement because that's what it is. It's very difficult to turn a political movement into a well structured, beautifully managed structure overnight because it must fluctuate it must move with how people are feeling. Obviously not everybody is politically pure, rather like our politicians that we have here. Some of them are not doing it for the good of the country, some of them are doing it for the good of themselves and the disability movement is no different. There are people in it who are only interested in their own careers. Others are really dedicated people. So there is bound to be changes. DPI had a quite substantial impact on the writing of the world programme of action in 1983, of disabled people because being a new organisation they immediately applied for observer status to the UN and were able to be involved in the world programme of action. They then had enormous influence in the mid 80's. We were trying to get a convention on the rights of disabled people. Unfortunately its time had definitely not come at that stage and instead we made do and were involved in the writing of the UN standard rules on the equalisation of opportunities. I have to say I don't think those rules are wonderful. There's a lot missing. Children are not in it. There is not enough around gender issues. There's not enough about, there's nothing about genetics, I subject I will come on to later. But they are very good guidelines for countries. Unfortunately, one of the problems about the UN standard rules is that it has no enforcement procedure. Most conventions as you know have an enforcement procedure throughout their committees who monitor member state records but the UN Standard Rules doesn't. All it has is this one rapport who goes rushing around the world seeing what the countries are doing and giving reports but it doesn't matter. Nobody says oh bad such and such a country, you haven't followed what you should do. So they're not really working and that is why DPI has been in the leading role of working for a convention again.

But one of the things, I want us to go back to the CIL movement because it's the independent living movement, because it is not something that should be forgotten in the whole trust of political

growth of disabled people. It was very interesting that within Disabled People's International, in the late 80's and early 90's, there was a lot of discussion about independent living and the countries from the developing regions thought it had nothing to do with them because it had been born in America they felt that it was not relevant to them and yet they were running organisations which were independent living centres all over the developing countries, practically in Southern African. There were excellent things. One of the best was an organisation called The Self Help Organisation of Paraplegics in Soweto, this was before the national government. And there disabled people had come together, got themselves work. They ran a factory which did mainstream work, it wasn't sheltered. They then realised they had transport, they had health support, they had educational support, they had a choir, they had a football team. They couldn't do much about the access of Soweto but then, you know they lived in extremely troubled and difficult times and under terrifying regimes. And in fact it was the regime and the fact of curfews that nearly brought their organisation to an end, didn't quite but it nearly did. And when they all discussing independent living they began to realise of course we've been doing independent living, its all the same thing. Its not about just a Western thing and I think this is one of the messages I have to get over to you very clearly. Although I've mentioned the input of some of the people from this country in the building of DPI, in fact the vast majority of people within DPI come from the developing world and one of DPI's strong convictions is that they should focus mostly on issues within the developing world. Because its there that the most exciting things are happening, because there's no doubt about it that over the years this international movement has made a difference. Its made it through its affect on the UN and the world programme of action, through the work of the national assemblies in their own countries. You have a situation in Zimbabwe who have now a constitution which is the only, which includes none discrimination legislation for disabled people which has the only definition of disability which is based purely and solely on the social model. I am right in thinking that I don't have to explain to you want the social model is, aren't I? Yes. Right and its not being enforced, which is the great problem but then our DDA wasn't being enforced until earlier this year. We have a situation in Uganda where disabled people, not

only is disability seen as a non discrimination issue within their constitution but within their electoral process it is quite, it's a very interesting political situation. Its a one party state but that means, but there have to be representative elections and representatives in parliament from disadvantaged groups, so there are five disabled people in their national parliament who are elected by disabled people not by non disabled people. There are ten women who are specifically elected by women, there are trade unionists, there are people from certain tribes. But this is not only reflected at the national level but is actually reflected at all local levels so that there has to be a gender balance by the way. That's a remarkable legislative framework,. I don't mean legislative, political framework. I find it very moving because I'll get a letter from somebody who's been elected, a disabled person who's been elected onto the local group of elders in some village in some remote area of Uganda who is absolutely thrilled that he's been put there and he's been voted for by the other disabled people so that they are seen as having a franchise. Also Uganda has an educational legislation that says that you can have, I think its, two children in every family are educated free but if there is a disabled child in the family they have to be one of those two and there has to be one of the girls has to be one of the two. That's remarkable legislation and change and that has happened because of the strength of the movement in Uganda. There's a similar but nothing anything like so good but better than most efforts in South Africa. So what I really want to point out to you that it is not just the west that is doing things, it really is the developing world that is using the opportunity for their massive political change that often happens, to ensuring a real move towards equalisation of opportunities for disabled people. Quite a considerable move. But what is stopping our progress. Why haven't we since the birth of DPI, why haven't we changed the world? Well why didn't women change the world when they started to get the vote and all the rest of it? And why has the black civil rights movement not been able to get rid of racism? I think attitudes against difference of any sort are still entrenched in human nature but I also think we face a lot of other problems. I don't think it's just attitudes about difference. I think there is an underlying feeling that disabled people are not human beings. That we don't, we are not covered by the universal declaration of

human rights that all people should be free and equal and I think that's been very clear in all the stuff that's coming out around genetics and bio-ethics. The fact that although we are covered by all the conventions, including the European convention on human rights, very little has been done to use those conventions to uphold our rights. Development strategies, the west is so fond of developing the south. You know once we got rid of the Empire so all our knights in shining armours can go out and bring the poor underdog in the developing world to reason through development programmes and its only very recently that the world has recognised that development programmes with those attitudes don't work. You only get decent development if you actually allow the people who you're developing to take a leading role. But to say people have been completely left out of any of this development, completely left out. Discussing the other day about a project which is happening now in Kenya on AIDS in a school for children. It actually was an inclusive school and they were teaching and training the children but they didn't include the disabled children and they were asked why didn't you include the disabled children. Oh well they are special and we don't know how to tell them about it, they're special and we can't do it and we don't have the expertise to do it. So here they were doing perfectly basic AIDS training with one lot of children and completely ignoring the disabled children because of this still persistent attitude that we are different or that we're 'special'. God, how I hate that word. Another thing that has stopped our progress has been the international classification on impairments, disability and handicap. Which do I understand you are going to discuss later on? Anyway, it's a long and difficult area, suffice to say it was put together by doctors. There was the international classification on disease. Doctors, particularly rehabilitation doctors didn't like just giving us labels, they wanted to know why we didn't work. So they wanted a further international classification. This was put together in 1980 by I regret to say somebody from this country. And it was on impairment, disability and handicap. They were consequential. Impairment led to disability, which was another word for non-functioning, functional limitation as they called it, and then handicap which they saw as not being able to participate. So even handicap was actually based on the fault of the individual and it was complete medical



model and it really has had a detrimental impact on people's attitudes, policy makers, statisticians, it's why statistics have always seen us as the imperfect. Now all these things the international movement has had to look at, to focus on and try and make changes towards because having recognised that those are the barriers, this is the work that's been done. DPI realise that they couldn't work in isolation. There are still the World Federation of the Deaf, the International Federation of the Blind's now become the World Blind Union and there's Inclusion International, which is the world organisation for parents and families of people with, their words, mental handicap. Not mine. There's also a very small but struggling organisation of the World Federation of Psychiatric Users and now all those organisations try to meet at least once a year, try to work together to do things together, put pressure together to make change and I think that's a very important move forward because there has been a lot of my organisation's better than your organisation, ya-boo-sucks. If we fight among each other, among ourselves we open the doors to the policy makers being able to divide and rule us.

Q. Can I ask you what you think the role charities have in [?] ?

A. Well obviously the charities are still there. I don't see them, think they're getting either further and further marginalised in some countries or they're being seen very clearly as service providers. I don't see them now as the great, they were a tremendous barrier ten years ago but I think world wide, I'm not just thinking about the UK, very carefully not because I think as there is an increasing understanding of disability as a human rights issue, and that's really the best important thing, that there is an understanding that the voice of disabled people has to be heard. The charities are still getting their voices on the television, they still do good but, its bad in this country but its not as bad in many other countries, especially in the developing world where it used to be.

Its the Oxfam's and the Action Aid's who only can do work in relation to specialisation and not the inclusion but this is something that the DPI and the national assemblies have to work on all the time. We have to obviously the greatest difference that has happened in the last twenty years is the slow acceptance by the outside world, as I call them, of the social model of disability and there is no doubt at all that this country has been in the vanguard

of writing that up, making sure that its understood and promulgating it, and your professor is one of the leaders of that. I should think that it's very important that you recognise that. That Mike Oliver, Vic Finklestein and Colin are the three who've really done more to change the world's understanding of the social model of disability than anybody else. So you should be very proud. It's been accepted by the world with enormous reluctance. I mentioned the international classification on impairment, disability and handicap, one of the things that DPI did earlier in the mid 80s was to say that that had to be revised, we had to get rid of it, well the revision process is still going on but I've personally been involved with it for many years and its been a harrowing experience but it has been remarkable seeing the change of professionals statisticians, classifiers, all these people who rule our lives, sitting in little offices, number crunching and saying well you go into that box and you got into that box and it affects non disabled people just as much. Its something about the way our society is organised which is quite terrifying to me, who would prefer anarchy any day. The understanding of the majority of people of the importance of the social model, of the rights model of disability is quite heart warming and just in the last two months the WHO are in charge of this classification have decided to try and go backwards on what we've been achieving and bring it back to a medical model and I've been really please because the professionals are all saying no, we actually see the point of looking at the barriers in terms of the environment and society and not in terms of the individual and that's the only way we're going to formulate decent policies and look at the world as it really should be and look at inclusion. So the understanding of the social model, the understanding of what I think we need to move on to call the rights model is the most important thing that's been achieved in the last twenty years. The achievement of course of our own solutions through independent living and the fact that we have come together with a very united voice. We are the only international rights movement which has a structure, an elected structure, a democratic structure through which we can operate. There isn't an international women's movement of the same democratic structure or black movement. And that is a strength. I think our hurdles are still the barriers are quite horrific. We're not funded properly, justice organisations are funded, rights

organisations, the charities, that's where the money goes. The charities get all the money but then charities can use methods for raising money that we would find objectionable and we do find objectionable and this puts us again in a difficult position. I find this whole question of money and funding of organisations very difficult. If you go to the Scandinavian countries where the organisations all do get a certain basic amount of funding from the government. Every disability organisation gets its core funding from the government, assured. They would have to be really corrupt before they'd lose it. All they have to do every year is send in their action plans and say that's it but they've lost their teeth, they've lost their fire, they don't fight. And in fact the situation of disabled people in these countries is not good, they are not accessible. There's less access in Stockholm than there is in London. That's interesting isn't it? Anyway I must stop and you must ask.

Q. You mentioned the social model in the context of the rights model, in some sense equated them, and then said but there's the need to move on to a rights model. Could you go, 'cos I would think there's quite a bit of difference between those two but perhaps not in terms of ...

A. If you recognise that today's society is supposed to be run on a rights basis. Its not obviously, many countries are particularly not. China for instance but you equate modern society with rights or an effort to achieve rights. Therefore the fact that the social model is the understanding that it is the interaction between the impaired individual and the social barriers so the rights model is the interaction between the impaired person and the lack of rights. The problem about using the term social model is that its now become, a bit of a back lash against it because we invented it. Because disabled people worked it out and expanded it, its not liked. So it may be more useful, I find it sometimes more useful, more diplomatic to use the term the rights model because then everybody can feel they own it. Its diplomacy rather than anything else.

Q. Its quite important conceptually because a lot of the explanations of social model goes back to try and explain the structural factors which might have led to that difference in rights

and then a focus, for example, the American disability movement which has always been more focused on a rights based rhetoric or agenda.

That's of course [?]

A. Exactly, they have a constitution and a bill of rights as we do now but in a way that's seems to have led to more of a focus on attitudes, discrimination, perhaps masked some of the more structural analysis that's come out of social model thinking. Yes I think this is the problem but I don't think the disability movement talked about a rights model. They talk about rights as they would as people in America. They have talked, disability thinkers have talked about the social model but independent living was their thing. They have not articulated why they are there. They haven't even articulated what's the definition of disability. I'm talking about people with disabilities. I mean any country that keeps on talking about people with disabilities hasn't really defined who disabled people are, so I don't think we can get into an across the Atlantic battle. Or at least not in the time allowed!

Q. I am American, **ADS** has a totally different attitude and it is very rights based, and I didn't face discrimination until I came here. Went to school, got a degree, my best friend's in a wheelchair, she's a medical doctor, we just did it!

A. Well you were lucky.

Q. Yea, very lucky cos I have met disabled people who did have problems but it is based on attitude and we do lack the structure, you throw in a lot of structure.

A. But we have structure for everybody, this is the problem.

Q. Exactly. We don't sit and define things as much.

A. No. We are awful navel gazers in this country. But I think its been a great gift to the movement as a whole that the British movement has done that and very important and just as important as the birth of the independent living movement.

Q. Every country has something wonderful.

A. Yes. I'm still waiting to see something come out of China that I could say was wonderful but otherwise you're nearly there. Good optimistic American remark if I may say so.

Q. You know the social model, one of the essence of its argument

is the celebration of difference, why don't we call ourselves impaired individuals then, because it involves the other model of the perfect human being, you know we are impaired?

A. Well we could probably but the point is that we are disabled. The impaired, I see no reason to call ourselves impaired people any more than I want to describe myself as curly hair really, curly haired people.

Q. You said impairment is more to satisfy other people really isn't it?

A. Well it might do. I think it might pander to the wishing to make us appear negative and I think we'd have a problem too because there are a lot of people who are impaired, who are not disabled people and when they've finally gone through their human DNA and they've got their little genetic make ups I think they will find that the vast majority of people are impaired people. What they won't be facing are the barriers which make them disabled people.

Q. Isn't that something you were saying about the most exciting things were happening in developing countries, and I was reminded of this Croatian project where they were complaining that they didn't have enough professionals in the institutionalisation and actually what they were doing without professionals was very exciting, so definitions of impairment were not important because professionals were not there.

A. Yes again this is a reflection of these particular societies and what they are used to and the climates they have lived in and what they are coming out of. What information they've been subjected to. We found when the wall came down for Eastern Europe there was no problem about finding organisations of disabled people, there was nothing else but organisations of disabled people under communism they had their own organisations, they ran them, they control them but they were completely separate. All the money was funded through them. And what has been difficult in Eastern Europe is to try and get those organisations, to politicise them, to bring them in to the main stream political environment. To show them that they are individuals who have a right to be in the mainstream. To teach them about human rights and democracy and the rest of it and we used to have a lot of people who were wanting professional input and of course there was an awful lot of professionals from countries like England who were having a ball game going over there and spending money from the charity they

are, showing them how to do meals on wheels and those sorts of ghastly things. I mean you've seen those terrible institutions. That's all that anybody ever sees and thinks about. Oh dear its the institutionalisation in Central and Eastern Europe but in fact that's just reflection of what all disabled people face or have faced and its getting better now but Croatia of course is one of the last. So much information has to be exchange. Actually what we are seeing even today here now is how much information we all lack. Well that's why you are studying because you are trying to get more information. But its terrifying for me as to how little information disabled people have, absolutely terrifying. They don't know about other people. You know it was that lack of information and getting the information that made DPI happen. It was sharing, it was learning from each other, it was being part of a whole but we don't learn about each other. When you see stuff about Croatia does anybody in the news or newspapers say anything about Croatian disabled people, you must be joking, not unless they make lovely pictures on the front of the newspapers.

Q. Going back to what you were saying about Uganda which was quite remarkable and certainly very interesting. Could it be argued that political systems were treating disabled people and women in a special way rather than people?

A. That's certainly an argument that is held by Ugandans that don't like a one party state and want several political parties and yes it does specialise I suppose or it separates the difference but it does celebrate the difference. And it gives power and you know power is, information is power but power is not something we as disabled people can really turn our backs on yet because there are very few instances where we have it.

Q. I'm doing a project looking at communication systems and I've read a lot of stuff that suggests that the Internet is a fantastic medium for information sharing on a global amongst disabled people, I just wondered how much it if at all you've seen the introduction of those kind of new communication systems effective the [?] ?

A. It is helping yes, because its quicker but again you are keeping out the vast majority of disabled people, in poor situations. I find the whole Internet thing, Disability Awareness in Action is only about information, its an information network so this is my daily bread. We have an egroup but the people from the developing

world are not on it. They still need information in the written word and on tape and alternate media. They still need street theatre, they still need. I think we have to be terribly sensitive to the imbalance of power that the Internet brings. Its just reinforcing the differences I think and I hope I'm not just saying this, I don't like it. I just am deeply worried. I think its a fairly useful tool and I wouldn't not use it, just as I think television's a very useful tool but I don't watch it all the time but I think we should see it as one tool, not the tool or the answer.

Some nodding of heads there.

Q. One of the things about Disability Awareness in Action is the newsletter, Disability Tribune. Its one of the most exciting things it does, its always got something in it that's either shocking or enthusing. I just wondered how secure you think the funding is for something like that and with that funding how well distributed do you think you can make it to disabled people?

A. The funding is not secure. We don't even have enough to get us to the end of this year but we've been living like that for the last eight years so I'm not slitting my throat yet and I haven't given out redundancy notices yet but that's what life is like on DAA. WE go to 160 countries. We have ever increasing circulation, it goes up almost every day. At the moment we have over 3000 addresses but the actual circulation is about 70,000 an issue. I'm sure if we actually did any marketing then your costs would go up. Its always free, its free because the costs of actually getting payment for it would be a nightmare. We do charge charities if they want copies, through the nose. I'm very flattered by what you say about the newsletter but it happened because the organisations, the international organisations recognise that we just didn't know anything and that was the whole point of the newsletter and I think the important thing is it goes out every month and its not just the usual thing which is about three times a year if you're lucky because the news is fairly up to date.

Q. I was going to ask you what role you think the disabled people's movement in Britain has and what impact does it have in the future on the international front.

A. I think the movement in this country is going through a bit of a bad patch at the moment but I really don't think we should lose heart because this is reflected throughout the world, this is always happening and I'm not just saying that, it really does happen all the

time and I'm sure we'll just take a deep breath and gourd our loins and go on to greater things but again its this awful problem, if you are going to be a real political movement then you can't provide services, you can't raise money if you don't provide services, you try to raise money for rights is very, very difficult. If you look at all other rights movements most of the time they only raise money through their own people. The trade union movement runs on itself but we can't do that because disabled people are so poor. I think its important and I think as far as its relationship with the international movement I think it is always going to be quite strong.

Q. Do you think the lack [?] disability activists?

A. Oh now there's lots of young disabled activist coming up, much more, no its lovely. Regeneration is good, there's many more, the numbers are growing. I just hope they are not going to be intimidated by us golden oldies and its time we shifted over. I'm retiring next year.

Q. I see a tension between sameness and difference as promoted within this movement, what I mean is sameness in terms of human rights, everyone deserves their human rights and difference as in the example the case of Uganda promoting specific difference of political action. Do you believe there's a tension first of all in this? What do you think are the implications? Would you prioritise by bringing in priority, which ideal would be first in your thoughts?

Should we be all together in the thought of enlightenment or has this completely failed and what is most important is political success?

A. First of all I think sameness is not what we are talking about. In terms of rights you're talking about universality. You used that at the end in your last question so I shall combine the two. I think universally, if you look at the universal declaration of human rights the whole point of it, and that's why it was put in place to stop a repetition of the genocide of the Nazi concentration camps and the end of the Second World War that's why it was written and you must never forget it. By the way I learned the other day that the first draft was written by a disabled man, which is an interesting piece of information. The whole point of that was the universality of rights to support difference to no longer allow difference to be a reason for elimination, so the point of the universal declaration is to support the right to difference, the right to none discrimination,



the right to equality dignity and freedom that some people whether caste, class, colour, whatever, age, there must be no difference. So I think its a celebration of difference.

I don't think there are tensions, I think it's a single directive really. It's a single objective to celebrate difference and, as you have all been learning, that's the basis of the social model.

Purpose: To outline the thinking of disabled people about their situation and status before the formulation of the ICIDH (International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap) in 1980, the growth of the international disability rights movement since 1980, its subsequent involvement in the revision process and then its hopes as to the effectiveness of the ICF (the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health-the revised ICIDH) in the future. Method: This is a personal analysis based on the author's experience as a disability rights activist and as a member of the Disability Rights Movement. Maya Sabatello. The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities marks a significant achievement for disability rights. Success is commonly attributed to the involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the drafting process at the United Nations. This chapter briefly recounts the history of the international disability rights movement. The Rights of Disabled Persons, which is the first rights-based international instrument on disability; declaring 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons and 1983 the beginning of the UN Decade of Disabled Persons; and establishing the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. Join Disability Rights International at 1 PM EST on October 26 for a live event to launch our newest report, Crimes Against Humanity: Decades of Violence and Abuse in Mexican Institutions for Children and Adults with Disabilities Register on Zoom. Read More. See More Recent News. Reports and Publications. Worldwide Children's Campaign. Disability Rights International convincingly documents, with heartbreaking photos and videos, practices that it calls torture. The New York Times. Disability Rights International refuses to accept that the disabled in poor countries should be consigned to lives of torture. The Washington Post. Disability Rights International changed my life. Raquel Montoya, Colectivo Chuhcan. Sign up for our e-Newsletter.