

LOCATION

Worldwide

PARTNER

HEALTHLINK WORLDWIDE, UK
 Established in 1977, Healthlink Worldwide is a UK registered charity that works in partnership with organisations in developing countries to improve the health and well being of poor and vulnerable communities by strengthening the provision, use and impact of information.

SUMMARY

The project documents learning from published and unpublished disability literature and makes it available to those working on disability issues in developing countries.

PERIOD OF FUNDING

February to December 2001

GRANT

£29,900

CONTACT

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Promoting good practice on disability internationally

BACKGROUND

Disabled people are often among the poorest and most marginalised members of any community, and there is a real need for practical initiatives that improve disabled people's lives. It is also important to document and share information on the many innovative activities that are making a difference. This will help ensure that projects are aware of related activities in other parts of the world, that national and international policies are developed with reference to community experiences, and that the international response to disability is well co-ordinated and more effective.

THE PROJECT

For many years, **Healthlink Worldwide** and partners such as the **Centre for International Child Health (CICH)** have been working to address the need for disability-focused information management. This has been done by collecting and cataloguing relevant material on disability and making this information available through web-based databases, directories and a physical resource centre.



MNJ/Marte/WHO

There is a real need for practical initiatives that improve disabled people's lives.

The KaR-funded project managed by Healthlink Worldwide has given added impetus to this work. It has enabled:

- the merging of the physical collections of Healthlink Worldwide and CICH to form the **Source International Information Support Centre (Source)**, which is housed in the library of the **Institute of Child Health** in London, **UK**. The project has also enabled Source to identify, index and catalogue more material than ever before, and the disability-related collection now consists of more than 3,000 items (the wider Source collection consists of over 20,000 materials). This includes published material, such as books, journals and newsletter articles, reports and CD-ROMs, as well as unpublished or 'grey' literature, such as evaluation reports. Source emphasises documenting and sharing experiences from developing countries as well as important international research, and its resources can be accessed free at Source and at the website www.asksource.org

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- the production of a printed disability and development directory, listing a selection of more than 240 disability materials, details of key organisations, websites, web-based databases and free or low-cost newsletters and journals. This directory is particularly useful for users without electronic capacity

- the creation of an electronic bibliographic database of materials, searchable free from the Source website. This bibliographic database is also now available on CD-ROM. In addition, the project is supporting the development of Source's electronic database of contacts for individuals and organisations working in disability worldwide.

Feedback from users indicates satisfaction with the range and quantity of information on the database and available in the centre.

Source also offers training in resource centre development and information management, and therefore the systems developed act as a model on which to base this training. The *Healthlink Worldwide resource centre manual* will draw on the lessons learned from the project,

providing a training resource for those wanting to set up and run information centres in resource-poor settings.

A final, important part of the work is signposting visitors and users to other sources of disability-related material including websites and printed and electronic databases.

Feedback from users indicates satisfaction with the range and quantity of information on the database and available in the centre. The databases, together with the directory, will be used to guide the KaR programme in assessing the needs for future disability-related research.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Some users would like greater access to the full text of materials. This is a demand which will be met by future projects.
- Source offers a platform for further developing access to electronic information for international users.
- Disability is only one subject area – such a project could be replicated in other subject areas, for example HIV and AIDS or child health.

FUTURE PLANS

Source and the databases will continue with the support of Healthlink Worldwide, CICH and Handicap International. The database and resource collection will be updated to keep abreast of current disability issues, and make the latest materials available.