Module 7 Transcript

RICHARD: We'll start from here. Hello everyone, and welcome to this our 7th module presentation, respect for law focusing on eliminating stigma and discrimination, and with me today, I am Richard Rieser General Secretary, are Sarah Kamau acting Chair from Kenya United Disabled Persons Kenya, and Thandiwe Mufulo Vice-Chair from South Africa. So over to you first of all Sarah, to introduce this module.

SARAH: Thank you Richard. Welcome again participants to this course. We thank you for keeping strong. I would like to start by introducing the course to say that disabled people often remain invisible in mainstream laws and policies. A contributing factor to this is stigma and discrimination which pushes them to corners both at home and in society. Across the world stereotypes, prejudice and stigma contribute to the discrimination and exclusion experienced by disabled people and their families in all aspects of their lives. This results in vicious perpetuation of exclusion and lack of access to fundamental developmental services, causing greater risk of exclusion and reinforcing the cycle of poverty. The media is a powerful tool used to communicate, create and raise awareness to a wider audience at a given time. Disability issues and right can be very well communicated using the media to promote accurate images and voices of disabled people. In the past, to some extent still today, the media has presented disabled people negatively as objects of pity, evil or a burden, yet we can can and should be portrayed as equal with different needs. Such effective portrayal across the wide range of media, press, radio, television and film and in online platforms plays an important part in breaking down stigma and prejudicial attitudes. Where people and their representative Disabled People's Organisation are able to engage on an ongoing basis with governments, progress can and has been made in enacting disability discrimination legislation. A continuing problem remains enforcement and implementation of legislation. Where progress on legislation and its implementation is not occurring, disabled people and our Disabled People's Organisations have had to resort to campaigning through publicity, petitioning, demonstration, protests and a variety of other tactics to bring about change.

RICHARD: The language.

SARAH: I will also talk about the language that Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum use, for the sake of conceptualisation during this course. 'Disabled people', why do we still choose to call ourselves 'disabled people'? In the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum we call ourselves 'disabled people' because of the development of the social model of disability. In the 19th and 20th century, a disabled people's medical condition was thought to be the root cause of their exclusion from society, an approach now referred to as the 'medical or individual model' of disability. We use the social model where the barriers of environment, attitude and organisation are what disable people with impairments and lead to prejudice and discrimination. So to call ourselves 'persons with disabilities' is to accept that we are objects and we are powerless. We also view ourselves as united by a common oppression so are proud to identify as 'disabled people', rather than 'people with disabilities'. When we are talking about UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities we will use the term 'people or persons with disabilities'. Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you very much Sarah. So let's have a look at this stigma. Lack of understanding and awareness regarding the causes of disabilities and their resulting characteristics is a key factor in the stigma experienced by disabled people. Misconceptions about the causes of impairment often result from cultural or religious beliefs. Impairment is often blamed on the misdeeds of ancestors, parents, misdeeds of parents of the disabled person themselves. This is still very strong in the Indian subcontinent, the idea of karma, supernatural forces such as demons, spirits, witchcraft, punishment or fate from God, very strong in many parts of Africa still. As a result, disabled people may be thought to be not quite human or a source of shame which has serious consequences for how they are treated. Misconceptions about the nature and abilities of disabled people including that they are unable to contribute financially, that they are not able to have a normal relationship, that they will be unable to report sexual abuse, that their impairment is contagious or they bring bad luck, that their bodies have magical powers which we have seen when we looked earlier at albinism and the appalling treatment of albinos in many parts of Africa. Or that they are witches with magic also contribute to the stigma discrimination and abuse. Now if you think about it, those misconceptions are a direct result of the behaviour and treatment of disabled people, from the society as a whole. So it's really about blaming the victim of discrimination, and prejudice, and then saying ah, but you're like that because of some fantastical explanation which has nothing to do with realities of oppression that are actually disabled people are facing. Discriminatory legislation and policies can reinforce prejudice and discrimination. For instance in Kenya I think it's still the case that a deaf or blind person cannot run to be President, because they have to be able to read in English and Swahili, and people, so these perpetuate the stereotypes. Different types of impairments carry different levels of stigma, as does the severity of the impairment and how it was acquired. People with intellectual disabilities, or severe mental health condition, albinism, sensory impairments are often more stigmatise the then people with say physical disabilities or people who are just visually impaired or blind. Disabled people who can participate in their communities experience less stigma than those with more severe impairments. Again, blaming the victim. You have an inaccessible community and unwelcoming community and then those who can't participate are more stigmatised. Females who are disabled are doubly disadvantaged due to the stigma associated both with gender and impairment and we will be coming on to a module in a few weeks which will be looking, Module 10, which will be looking at that in much more detail. Socio-economic status can affect attitudes towards disabilities, we saw that in the unit on livelihood, how the cycle of excluding people leads to their poverty. Disabled people in rural areas may experience more half full practices than urban areas because rural areas often have a lower level of education and the cultural beliefs are still much stronger, han in urban areas where more global views are around, because of attitudes that come from the media and social media. So, cultural religious beliefs. So much of Africa, before Christian missionaries, had a traditional animism which including beliefs that impairments are punishment for bad deeds or results of witchcraft exercised by others. In fact, in many cultures, everything in the environment had to be explained by some sort of spirits that were within them, and these ideas which are still quite prevelant, were of course then linked to disability as well. Graft in on top of that, Christianity and we'll see a film about this in a minute, that there's a sort of fatalism of belief which revolves around half understood Christian notions which are linked with the traditional views, the idea that results of disabilities is an Act of God. Actions of parents, mainly mothers. Research indicates that beliefs about the cause of disability in say Cameroon, Uganda, Zambia include it's due to the sin of promiscuity of the mother. Research in Cameroon, Uganda, Zambia indicates that beliefs about cause of disabilities including in an ancestral curse. Going back to A, the irony with men carrying the extra chromosome the Y chromosome that many, many more than 500 congenital condition are passed on by the men yet the mother is always blamed which is typical of the sexism of many societies. Supernatural demons, spirits, research indicate that beliefs about the cause of disability in Cameroon, Uganda and Zambia include are due to demonic possession and that disabled people are not really human. Witchcraft, many Kenyans believe that an impairment results from witchcraft spells placed either upon the family or the disabled people disabled person. A variant of that is that the family has got richer because they have sold almost the soul of the child in some sort of magical exchange. God, punishment, fate, Nigeria, false beliefs about cause of disability include it's a curse from God. Now it's very hard to deal with these beliefs, because although you can have education and modern rationalist thought, people still go back to cultural roots, it's very hard to get rid of these ideas. We'll look in a minute at things that have actually worked. In West Africa children were not believed to be capable of living independent lives, were expected to require constant help from non-disabled people. Disabled people can't have normal relationships or being sexually active. Study in Bangladesh in India found that families arranged marriages for daughters with disabilities with whoever accepted them because of the low expectations they had of their daughters who were disabled. isabled people are contagious or bring bad lack. Communities may shun disabled people and their families because they believe they will spread their ill-fortune. Disabled people are unable to contribute. Stigma occurs because of the expectation that disabled people that they are a burden. In West Africa for example, disabled children are not only seen as a financial and resource liability internally but also by the larger community resulting in the shaming of the family and disabled members. Misconceptions, disabled people will not be able to report sexual abuse, which in turn leads to many people thinking that they can sexually abuse disabled girls with impunity. There's also a whole series of more modern myths that a cure for HIV is to have sex with a disabled girl. Misconceptions, disabled people are witches, disabled people especially children with autism and people with mental health problems are particular particular targets of witchcraft accusations due to their low social status but also because of other interests in acquiring property or money. So we can see there's a whole range of processes of stigmatisation that are still operating in many cultures across the Commonwealth. Let's have a look at this film which is a particularly bringing –

[video playing]

RICHARD: That brings to mind the discussions we had on health over Article 12, and mental health and remember Article 12 which was behind what they were saying there, is very important for people with mental health issues. But then we saw a really good example of how modern hospitals were still run on the ideas that children and adults who had mental health issues somehow had some contagion that something was happening to them that had to be contained, chained up and so on. Then when they went to the prayer camp we have what I talked about earlier, the combination of a more modern view and Christianity view latched on to the older ideas of animism. This is a really toxic cocktail to affect people so the work there that Human Rights Watch were recording in that film, I think is a really salutary example to us but it also sets an example of what can be done so what else can be done in this situation? Well we need to work with families, and parents community based rehabilitation, particularly in India and Bangladesh has demonstrated there where groups of community works go into the villages and explain to parents why their child has cerebral palsy, or spinal injury or one of the other conditions, epilepsy, that they have and this this something to do with karma or spells, this is to do with the chances of getting a condition. And that their children have every right to be in the community alongside everybody else. Or contact with empowered disabled people with DPOs intervening as we saw there, DPO intervening in those situations to actually try and improve the situation and indeed it's about contacting the people who have been the victims of this stigma and empowering them to resist, the negativity that is actually spread across the community which disempowers people so they feel they can't do anything. Actually seeing people with various impairing condition being included in activities in society and in the media, is a crucial thing in this. Progressive Government policies have helped to gradually change attitudes, the Governments of Kenya and Uganda have done quite a lot on that to actually move things forward. Laws and policies have an important role to play in helping to avoid or remedy harmful cultural beliefs or practices, prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. Anti-albinism discrimination task forces set up in Tanzania and Malawi where people who practice this are brought to courts and actually can be imprisoned or heavily fined. Work with village elders and leaders to change the attitudes in the local community and educate and get them to lead the rest of their community has shown to be very effective, for instance in Zanzibar working with people with mental health, learning difficulties there. Village gatherings that use drama, song and speeches from invited dignitary or drama groups tailored for their particular culture with aim of nurturing a pride in disabilities in families in local communities. I will show you a film about that in an inclusion project in Zanzibar when we get on to that module on exclusive education, number 9. Schools inclusive and accessible human rights education in schools which address specific harmful beliefs about disability in that culture. This should be part of the curriculum for all young people learning in schools. So we can see quite a lot can be done in the community. What about the media. Well the media has we have said is very influential, and established societal norms, disabled people are covered in the press, media, press, film, media, TV advertising as well but needs to be taken account of it. It's important to challenge stereotypes when they occur in the media. Our DPOs need to become much better at doing that, not just one or two people. But you know, setting up media watches and so on to so when we see something that is negative, it's actually challenged. Untrue perceptions, generally associated with disability must be challenged. These negative and untrue perceptions are often pre-conditioned of how people are treated, associate in respond to disabled people ourselves. So it's deep-rooted beliefs, ignorance, fear, negative untrue perceptions, influence the low expectations of disabled people and their families about their families and limiting their skills. This can often be the case, modern television around the world has lots of game shows, and other activities, because it's cheaper than paying actors to just get members of the public to come on and bake a cake or whatever else we need to make sure and lobby that there are disabled people taking part in all of those types of shows. If it's going to be representative of the population, at least 1 in 6 of them needs to be disabled people. Limitations on disabled people are violation of their basic human rights. However these rights are often violated due to lack of information. There are many cultural and literary manifest tation of stereotypes which as we have seen which are being reinforced in myths, legend and literature. So it's not only the basic culture of the village, but you also the culture that has been the dominant culture across the Commonwealth which is English literature for instance, most countries teach English rightly, there are many stereotypes in English literature which need to be challenged. Just because it English literature doesn't mean that it's right. So for instance, Tiny Tim in a Christmas Carol shown in a pathetic way. Jane Eyre is seen as not lovable by Rochester until he is then blind himself. These stereotypes are all pretty negative about disabled people. And it's disheartening to think that these stereotypes believe some mental attitude and perception continue to be perpetuated. So the silent movies, when we got the silent movie started about 1888, first silent one-reeler made, by the 1920s which is this little clip I am going to show you, the cinema in Hollywood still had not got the talkies but it was sending films out round the world, this one called The Penalty. Lon Chaney, who played more than 400 disabled villains in his career he wasn't disabled himself, unless he had some mental health issues, but he here is as the villainous boss intimidating these women in a hat factory.

[video playing]

RICHARD: He's an evil villain. We can find many of these, in fact one third of the output of the silent movie era of Hollywood, by James Norden who's an expert on this has analysed it, one third of the output featured disability so stories like Treasure Island were made over an over again. Seven silent movies of Treasure Island, why? Because hooks, eye patches, wooden legs are very photogenic and told the story with few captions, so these stories were made over and over again. The Phantom of the Opera similar one, that was made a number of times. Here's a more recent stereotype, I will have to pause it as we go for the captioner because they do go very quickly so I will try to pause it as we go through to give you a chance to catch up on the captions as we go, it's not ideal but I think it's still worth showing.

[video playing]

>>:This organisation, do you know what it's called?

>>: It's name is Spectre. It's a sensitivity training programme.

>>: James, you have a creepy prejudice against people with disabilities.

>>: You noticed.

>>: Would be hard not to, you're literally always killing them. Dr No amputee with no hands, Largo missing an eye. Blofeld disabled used a wheelchair, Tee Hee Johnson. [video rewound slightly] You have a creepy prejudice against people.

>>: You noticed.

>>: It would be hard not to, you're literally always killing them. Dr No amputee with no hands, Largo missing an eye, Blofeld disabled used a wheelchair, Tee Hee Johnson amputee with claw hands, Scaramanga and the list keeps going. It's insane. Stromberg webbed hands, Jaws growth defect and mental health, Trevelyan, [word word] facial scar. One time you literally skewered a man's wheelchair with a helicopter rail and dropped him 20 stories into an incinerator. I guess this happened back in 70s when people were not as sensitive to this stuff, but some of this, is inexcusable. Le Chifre, [word word] Raoul Silva missing jaw and facial disfigurement. The whole disabled person as a supervillain thing is cliched and offensive. I have never seen anyone cling to stereotypes so stubbornly.

>>: Or quite so stylishly.

>>: Don't start with the flirting, this is not funny.

>>: You will be given a series of targets, try not to shoot one with a disability. This should be incredibly easy.

>>: Oh this is worse than I thought.

RICHARD: So tongue in cheek, of course, James Bond was an example of Ian Fleming stories, it seems that his villains that he was up against nearly all had some sort of impairment. Now the reality is that the most evil people if there are such things in the world like mass serial killers you wouldn't be able to pick them out from the crowd, they have no impairment, they have no reason to be like that yet in the cinema world very often they come across in this way. Or, another stereotype is that we're laughable, so take the film Hear No Evil See No Evil where the deaf man and blind man we're meant to laugh. Or then even worse Dumb and Dumber, two people with learning activities we were meant to laugh at that, or Life Is Too Short where Ricky Gervais has Warwick on his, I have forgotten his name, but anyway short, Warwick Davis on his shoulders that's all about play for fun. The Ringer with people with learning difficulties. In Nollywood in Nigeria we get this Beyond Disability, again a cause for mirth, or Tropic Thunder, another film which makes fun of people with learning difficulties or a series in Britain which may or may not have been exported round the world called Little Britain, in which there is always a man in a wheelchair when people are not looking who jumps out, in another words all wheelchair users are fakers. Or King Pin where we get the ridiculous thing of a man with a false arm, his arm gets caught to the ball in bowling ball and it goes down the lane. So this is all for cheap laughs, but does it do disabled people much good? I would say it probably does it quite a lot of harm, or people we have already looked at there's another picture of James Bond surrounded by three villains, each with their impairment. Or Dustin Hoffman playing Hook in Captain Hook, Nightmare on Elm street. We have got another one there, which is a facially disfigured person from a fire, or Dick Tracy where all of the baddies have some sort of impairment, and these ideas like this Two Face in the Batman comics, come from comic culture, United States comic culture which has in the last 20 years turned into big business, 30 years, remakes as films. And the morality of these comics is that good looks good, and bad looks bad. Far from the truth. Or you can take Mini Me who is evil, or the Phantom of the Opera scary, and here's another Nollywood film, The Evil Child. So we can see these stereotypes coming all the time, thick and fast around us. Well how are we doing in terms of presentation of portrayal? What's been noticeable in the last 10 years or go, is that many more disabled characters have been written into material coming out of Europe and America. So Homeland, Carrie is bipolar. Tony Soprano in The Sopranos has anxiety, Detective Monk has OCD, Doc Martin has haemaphobia and OCD. In Glee, one of the main characters is a wheelchair user, the French film Untouchable, we have a CEO who is spinally injured and from wanting to kill himself becomes quite good, but both characters not played by disabled people. Rust and Bone where a double amputee is played by a leading French actress or The Bridge where Sonya Cross has Aspergers as a detective or The Sessions, where which is a film of sexual exploration of someone with severe polo, all played by non-disabled actors. This one Margarita with a Straw, tells a true story of a disabled woman with cerebral palsy, but is played by a Bollywood actress who's not disabled. My Name is Khan, again a Bollywood film dealing with autism where the character is not someone with autism. The actor on the other hand, we have also seen a growth in disabled actors, playing disabled parts so Tyron in Game of Thrones, perhaps the most popular series on the planet. Peter Dinklage is actually a person of short stature, or Paula Sage playing Roberta in Afterlife is someone with Down's Syndrome. R J Mitte in Breaking Bad is actually someone who is a crutch user because of his cerebral palsy. Kitty McKeever in a British soap Emmerdale for 4 years was actually a blind person playing a blind person. David Proud and Lisa Hammond in a long running series in the UK, Eastenders, both actually wheelchair users and Liz Carr in Silent Witness is indeed not only a disabled person, but a leading advocate for disability rights. Pablo Pineda in the film Yo Tambien or Me Too is someone with Down's Syndrome who acts and plays someone with Down's Syndrome. There is beginning to be a change in way the media portrays us which is for the good. Let's have a look at a clip now from Margarita with a Straw, to see how this is actually dealt with. This is actually based on the story of her cousin the woman who wrote this, [name] who is the leading person in an NGO DPO Adapt in Mumbai. So it's based on true life experience this film. That was just the titles.

[video playing]

GEMMA: Richard? Richard?

RICHARD: Yes.

GEMMA: I am sorry I have paused the recording, I think it's going to be too hard to hear you over the sound.

RICHARD: All right so we'll go back to the beginning on that.

GEMMA: Go back to the beginning you need to either turn the sound off or not talk or something.

RICHARD: So I will go back not all the way but will go to the ... I.

GEMMA: I will resume recording now.

RICHARD: This a story about a young woman with cerebral palsy in Mumbai.

[Richard audio describing the video]

RICHARD: Margarita with a Straw. What's interesting about this film is that although the main character was a well-known Bollywood actress, several of the supporting characters are actually played by disabled people, including the blind girl and the original boy that she looks to. So that's interesting progress. Another film which I think is Yo Tambien which I mentioned, features Pablo Pineda. Now Pablo is very interesting, here is a young man with Down's Syndrome, he's now in his 40s but his mother insisted that he went to mainstream school, and he actually has a master's degree in teaching, and this is semi-biographical. He's working now in an NGO which gives support to people with learning difficulties, he fancies this blonde woman who he is on the beach with now. After many attempts he has got her to take him out for the day and they are having a discussion and I will read the discussion. [video playing] I will just stop it and cut the sound down so I can read it because most people on this won't be able to speak Spanish anyway.

[Richard audio describing the subtitles and film]

RICHARD: Now the film goes on and she does really like him but in the end perhaps out of sympathy she does have sex with him once, which he finds amazing, but the film ends with him going off independently, having confidence, and you can tell that in the future he is going to build his own relationships based on love and trust. So that is a very progressive film that goes along way. In dealing with the media we need to a drop this sort of code of practice, when we're talking to screen writers, actors, producer's directors, journalist, news presenters and so on. Shun one-dimensional characterisation, display disabled people as having complex personalities. Avoid depicting us as always receiving, avoid presenting fundamental characteristics as determining our personality. Avoid depicting us as objects of curiousity, make us ordinary people with the whole variety that human beings have. Our impairments should not be ridiculed and made the butt of jokes. Avoid sensationalising us as, especially as victims or perpetrators of violence. Refrain from endowing us with superhuman attributes. Avoid making our attitude the problem. Show the barriers we face that keep us from living useful lives. Avoid showing disabled people as non-sexual, show us in loving relationships and expressing the same range of sexual needs and desires as non-disabled people. Show us as ordinary parts of life in all forms of representation, and, most importantly, show us, portray us cast us as, and train us and write us into your scripts programmes and publication, and employ us in the media. The media have millions of jobs and disabled people need to be working in those jobs to make a difference around the world a across the Commonwealth. So what can we do? DPOs can provide training on stereotypes and imagery, we can set up a media watch to monitor portrayal. DPOs have to organise with media companies, media professionals, presenters and actors, directors, editors and, script writers, producers advertisers and government does not only challenge negative portrayal and explain why these are both offensive and disempowering to disabled people but also challenge the absence. A few years ago as part of the British disability movement we managed to get government advertising and they advertised for lots of jobs, and benefits and so on, to feature at least 40% disabled people these were not just about further furring for disability benefits, they were advertising for all sorts of things, to feature disabled people as part of the general life of the community. That can make a huge difference, and governments can't really say no if they have signed the Convention because Article 8 on awareness raising says they have to do such things. Work with journalists to report stories, to not sensationalise stories on disability. In the course book you will find some guidance for journalists, we'll come back to that when we have the seminar. Discrimination then. Discrimination will only end with existence of both a strong anti-discrimination policy based on the social model all disability and a well-funded disabled people movement to enforce it. The weakness, here we are now, 13 years or more after disability legislation came in round the world and it just is not being implemented, and the gap is the lack of a well-funded and well trained disability movement that understand things from a disability rights point of view, from the social model as we are featuring in this course. In many countries we have the legislation, the governments seem to lack the political will to enforce the implementation. In other countries the legislation is outmoded or not in line with the UNCRPD. In both cases we need a renewed and reinvigorated disabled people's movement to do this. Need strong monitoring mechanisms. A means of legal redress easily and very accessible and available. Awareness raising led by disabled people, and disability equality training for all in authority of what the UNCRPD really means. What is the difference between awareness raising and equality training? Well the difference is anybody can do raising awareness; don't do that, don't show disabled people in that sort of way. Disability equality training on the hand is training the professionals have to go into which is led and developed by disabled people who have learned to be trainers, where they use their experience of the oppression of disability, to deeply challenge the attitudes and practices of those who are in authority. I have seen this most successfully done with people with learning difficulties going in and running a lecture for trainee doctors at Barts hospital, where they take control of what is going on on that curriculum on that day. These are doctors who are steeped in the medical model, who spend three years dissecting bodies and somehow think that gives them a knowledge of how to practice medicine with the range of people who will present in their clinics, and in their surgeries. That antidote of the disabled people, particularly those who they would see as least able to tell them anything, telling them they have got it wrong, is really powerful. We need to develop that capacity wherever we are, in all DPOs around the world Now over to Thandiwe to take us through a few examples of people standing up for and to try and change and challenge discrimination. So Thandi. If you could come in on George Daniel, who I knew, and was indeed the vice-chair of the first incarnation of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum. You with us Thandi?

THANDIWE: Thank you so much Richard, good afternoon everybody, it's afternoon in South Africa, let me say just its [inaudible]. Like Richard said my name is Thandiwe Mufulo. We're going to talk about the 116 day protest that was done by George Daniel, the Chairperson of the movement in Trinidad & Tobago in the year 2003. The protest started soon after the state owned National Flour Mills refused to hire Devon Garraway and Anthony Diaz in the first week of May. It ended when Prime Minister Patrick Manning promised employment at the facility for the two men, who are the members of the Trinidad & Tobago branch of Disabled People International, along with other significant concessions. During the 15 week demonstration, protesters gathered under a tent outside National Flour Mills educating reporters, government officials and the public about their issues. According to George Daniel, President of the local DPI chapter, Mr Manning agreed to several conditions in addition to hiring Garraway and Diaz. Daniel said that Manning promised a disabilities act similar to the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act would be put in place to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Which is a good start as Manning's commitment that all schools, including old buildings, would be made accessible to persons with disabilities. This led to the legislation eventually.

RICHARD: Thank you.

RICHARD: Now we're going to just show you a film about another struggle in 1995. Starting in 1992 there had been 16 attempts to bring disability discrimination through the UK Parliament. At each attempt the Government of the day had spoken it out, filibustered, asked endless questions as it wasn't agenda'd by Government but by private members bills, the Government did all they could to stop it going through. In 1995 disabled people in desperation broke out and started demonstrating on the streets in order to force the issue and here's a short little film about what they did.

[video playing]

RICHARD: It did lead to the Disability Discrimination Act which was quite weak legislation, but later the Amendment Acts were passed in 2001 bringing all education under it and 2005 all public sector, and then those were incorporated into the 2010 Equality Act but we lost some things with that. So it's eternal vigilance is what it's about. I will bring Thandiwe in again to talk about the struggles in South Africa, similar struggles to bring things about.

GEMMA: Richard we're at 53 minutes.

RICHARD: We have got about 7 minutes to go, I think we'll carry on. Thandiwe.

THANDIWE: Thank you again Richard. In South Africa we have got what we called Rainbow Nation, and strong constitutional commitments in the post-apartheid era to equality and inclusion for all, much legislation was passed. The positive policy environment in South Africa presents unique opportunities for disabled people to address issues such as poverty, high levels of unemployment, education of disability children and young people, access to Social Security and assistive devices, access to housing, public health services and transport. But the current legislation in the form of the employment equity act, social assistance act, skills development act, skills development levy act, and others, has helped create a new sense of awareness of the needs people with disabilities. However, with the exception of a few policies such as the social assistance act, the implementation of these policies has had marginal impact on the lives of majority of disabled people in South Africa. We have got this beautiful policies, legislation but the problem of implementation continues and were not helped by moving responsibility for disability from the President office to the Department of Social Security in 2014. This is again the point with inclusive education where currently 600,000 disabled children are out of school despite laws such as the 1996 Education Act which guaranteed education for all disabled people. Including now we have got COVID-19 it's even worse. Children now they are expected to use, you know, media to study which for most of disabled children they don't have access to that. Secondly they cannot use them so it becomes even worse so we have got this beautiful all even our constitution is good, the implementation is the problem so as disabled people South Africa it's so seriously we're challenging the Government to say they need to change how they do things. And I will agree with the Britain people that they must we must just follow what they have done, the Government will listen. We're still fighting for our rights.

RICHARD: We have got a little news clip on that which you can comment on at the end which we'll play now.

[video playing]

>>: South Africa is key legislation that caters for people with disabilities. But the reality is that these laws has not made life any easier for the disabled community.

>>: The simplest most important example that I can give to is you go to a mall, the parking bay that is reserved for people with disabilities, maybe you have been one of the very leaders of that, always there is somebody is in a hurry to drop off this box or to drop off something in this office, and is going to use that parking and come back. When you come as a person with a disability wanting to use that parking you can't use it.

>>: Disabled People of South Africa is an organisation run by the disabled, to fight for the rights of the disabled. They deal firsthand in an unaccommodating society, they feel theirs is not a social problem, but one of human rights.

>>: Most of our problems are based on the violation of human rights, the right to freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of being association, freedom of, you know even the most important freedom in access to information is very limited for people with disabilities, then you can find yourself you can ask yourself a question as disabled people, when we are looked at as social problems then when are we going to be respected.

>>: Many people in businesses are ignoring the laws, which makes life for the disabled all the more difficult. Especially for those in wheelchairs.

>>: You look at transportation system they do not even care to stop for a person in a wheelchair. Buildings, offices you want to go to the office you will find there are stairs there, there are not ramps to be able to go in you have to beg and ask somebody to come and hope the special door for you to be able to come inside the building. We constantly leave [inaudible] mentality because there are the surrounding that we live in pushes us to be in that.

>>: By law, 2% of the staff of companies and Government must be disabled people, yet less than 1% of people with disabilities are employed.

>>: We're human, we're living, we have got needs just as anybody else. I aspire to have my own house, I aspire to have my own car and drive my own car, and how do I get those? I need to get employed, and I think I can make a meaningful contribution in the South African economy by getting employed, not to bleed the state coffers by receiving disability grants for the rest of my life.

>>: In the last 22 years of democracy, Government has made strides in passing new laws to help the disabled.

>>: Our Government has done a lot legislatively towards normalising the playing field for persons with disabilities, we have got an Employment Equity Act, we have got a Reasonable Accommodation Act, you know we have got a number of legislatives that are in place that speaks towards you know making a disabled person's life easier. A lot of them. Now the problem is at the implementation level, and why we don't have an implementation system that is quite visible is because nobody is playing the monitoring the evaluation roles.

>>: Previously disability fell under the Presidency mandate, in 2014 it was moved to the Department of Social Development. A move that has angered disabled activists.

RICHARD: I will stop it there and let you Thandiwe say a little bit more. Thandiwe?

THANDIWE: Yes thank you Richard. All that has been happening on the video that is the truth that is our [inaudible] problem with the [inaudible] that is exactly what is happening in South Africa and all 9 provinces where we're having much it [inaudible] making sure the Presidency is listening to us. Now the disability it has gone back to the President, but it's one of the same thing. Nothing is happening you don't see anything. So actually, nothing has changed, 25 years now in democracy, but we're still striving to make sure, when it comes to women it's even worse. It's even worse to women. When it comes to sexual rights you know in South Africa, if you have got a mental disability you become pregnant the family member will just say no and you are being aborted without your permission, because you cannot look after the child, but we're able to look after their own children, but they cannot trust you to look after your child, your own child so there's a lot that is happening.

RICHARD: Ok I have to stop you there because we're running out of time. We come to Sarah to conclude this session please. Thank you Thandiwe.

THANDIWE: Thank you so much.

RICHARD: Sarah?

SARAH: Thank you Richard. I want to conclude this session by giving a few concluding thoughts about what we should do so we can ensure this stigmatisation and inclusion is achieved. All decision making positions in private and public organisations need to receive disability equality training delivered by disabled equality trainers. Then develop plans to remove barriers in their organisations and promote disability equality. However, as we have seen the most effective way of bringing about change and to challenge stigma and discrimination against disabled people is the self-organisation and self-advocacy by disabled people and their organisations, their DPOs. As anti-discriminatory laws in line with UNCRPD is only the first stage on the road to disability equalities, this needs code ands directive for their implementation across all areas of society. Awareness needs to be raised and disabled people and their families need to know their rights and how to enforce them. It should not be left to disabled people to do this. If laws are passed then the governments, civil service and human rights institutes need to monitor what is going on and there needs to be sufficient funding, there is need for sufficient funding to do this. There must be a legal right to challenge disability discrimination judgment must be thoroughly enforced by the state and judiciary. Only in this way can we hope to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with nobody left behind. Thank you.

RICHARD: Thank you very much, and I think we will end it there as we are at our time limit, but thank you much for everyone who contributed to this.