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Graphic Skills Used To Aid Discussion



Graphic Facilitator
Pen Mendonça.

A New Zealand graphic facilitator working in Britain is using her artistic skills to improve communication with people with intellectual disabilities.

Pen Mendonça works in partnership with people with intellectual disabilities in a group discussion by using pictures and text to assist and describe the discussion.

Pen recently visited the Office for

Disability Issues to present a seminar on graphic facilitation and her involvement in a British Government Taskforce on Learning Disability. The seminar was jointly hosted by the Office, the National Health Committee and the IHC Advocacy Service.

The British Taskforce, which is co-chaired by two people, one of whom has an intellectual disability, was set up as a result of the British Department of Health's 2001 White Paper – Valuing People: A new strategy for people with learning disability.

This paper recommended actions that government departments should take to ensure people with intellectual disabilities are not excluded and do not experience discrimination.

Pen shared with seminar participants how the Taskforce worked with disabled people to produce one report combining illustration and text, that met everyone's communication needs, rather than producing standard and easy-to-read versions.

The report – Rights, Independence, Choice and Inclusion, is online at: www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/LearningDisabilities/fs/en



One of Pen's illustrations of how she involves people with intellectual disabilities in discussions.

Group Special Education Holds Community Meetings

Community meetings for anyone interested in local special education services and resources were held around the country between August and October by the Ministry of Education's Group Special Education.

At each meeting information about local special education services and resources was presented and feedback about what parents, educators and disabled people see as education priorities sought. People were asked what's working well and not so well in special education.

This process aims to develop closer working relationships with parents, educators and people with disabilities. The information being presented and sought will help start an information exchange so people can become more involved in the local service planning process.

Feedback will be fed into planning for local special education service provision and into national planning processes. District reports, containing the resourcing information and the perceptions of the people giving feedback, will be written at the end of the process and available at the beginning of 2005.

For further information access www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/letstalk

NZ Sign Language Bill Progresses

The Justice and Electoral Select Committee plans to report back to the House on the NZ Sign Language Bill in December 2004. A date for the second reading of the Bill will then be set. The Office will provide updates on this Bill at www.odi.govt.nz/about/nzsl.html



Office NZ Sign Language
Interpreter Rosie Henley.

Work Plans Detail Action On Strategy

Government agencies' work plans highlighting their commitments to implementing the New Zealand Disability Strategy for 2004-2005 are now available on the Office for Disability Issues website.

This year, in addition to all central government departments, five crown entities have provided work plans – Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Sport and Recreation New Zealand, Housing New Zealand Corporation, the Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission. For the last two agencies, it is their first implementation plan.

Office Director Jan Scown says the Office has an ongoing role in supporting government agencies to identify work in policy, service development and delivery that can contribute to the inclusion and participation of disabled people.

“Encouraging linkages, especially between departments and the disability sector, has been a focus for us this year. For larger departments it is a matter of establishing good internal

relationships so that plans cover activity across the whole department,” she says.

Another focus for all departments and agencies has been increased consultation with the disability sector.

To read about the work plans for 2004-2005 go to www.odi.govt.nz/nzds/index.html

The fourth annual report on progress covering activity from July 2003 to June 2004, to be published by the end of this year, will also detail key activity by Government to implement the Disability Strategy. For a copy of this report contact the Office on Ph 04 918 9573, Fax 04 918 0075 or Email odi@msd.govt.nz

Highlights From 2004-05 Work Plans

Video For Safer Communities

A video, Get Involved, has been produced in English and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) to enhance the safety of disabled people in their local communities. It features a small panel in the right hand corner of the screen with a NZSL interpreter. The video was produced by Neighbourhood Support with production assistance from NZ Police and the Deaf Association.

Disability Audit Tool

The Department of Internal Affairs has developed a Disability Audit tool in conjunction with disabled people. By March 2005 the tool will be in use throughout

Internal Affairs to identify actions to remove barriers to the participation of disabled people. It covers leadership and accountability, disability training, disabled staff, communication and information, developing new policy and services, consulting and campaigns, frontline service, customer satisfaction, technology and physical access.

Profiling Māori

Te Puni Kōkiri is profiling disabled Māori in its six-weekly publication Kōkiri Paetae. Two articles about the achievements of disabled Māori will be included in upcoming issues.

Briefly

The Ministry of Transport, in partnership with Transfund, is conducting phase two of the review of the Total Mobility Scheme, which subsidises taxi fares. It will identify options to improve the adequacy, consistency, portability, sustainability and coverage of the scheme. Consultation will occur later this year. Check out progress at www.transport.govt.nz

Twenty representatives from Inclusion Japan recently visited the Office with their host IHC. They discussed the NZ Disability Strategy, the role of the Office and its relationship with government and the disability sector, and how disabled people are included in policy development in New Zealand.

The Ministry of Social Development's new Family and Community Services has a useful online national directory of services, that can be searched by service provider and region. It can be accessed at www.familyservices.govt.nz

The new Department of Building and Housing starts on 1 November 2004. It will incorporate the Building Industry Authority, the Ministry of Housing and other building-related policy functions.

The Office has been recognised for its innovative approach to communication by being selected as a finalist in the BearingPoint Innovation Awards. The recognition relates to the Office's video clips, which are available on its website. The winner was being announced as Disability Issues News went to print.