

## **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2012/13**

Once again it has been a very busy year - one that has included the production of two films and a number of new initiatives, especially in relation to distribution.

“Therapy in Action”, made in Kenya in association with Cerebral Palsy Africa was a first of its kind for PFP – a pure teaching film, a tool to be used by trainers for the purpose of demonstrating and explaining technique, in this case that of the physiotherapist working with children with cerebral palsy.

Our partner, Cerebral Palsy Africa, has been teaching therapists and community workers in a number of Africa countries for several years and with considerable success. However, they have felt hampered by a lack of good training tools, and in particular material which is relevant to African therapists and to the African situation. They wanted a tool they could use during training and one that they could also leave behind for physiotherapists to refer to after the CPA trainers have left.

The resultant film, “Therapy in Action” is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to managing cerebral palsy, but it offers positive examples of using a problem solving approach to choosing the most appropriate treatment, and provides students with the opportunity to observe and analyse the problems facing children with this particular disability. It comprises five case studies, chosen to illustrate different issues, and by means of a more highly developed menu than any that PFP has attempted before, breaks the treatment down into a number of separate techniques which the trainer can select as appropriate and play over and over again if that is what is required.

Another first for PFP in making this film, was the implementation of our plan to provide paid mentored work experience for disadvantaged filmmakers in the countries in which we work. For “Therapy in Action” we employed, as second camera, a young graduate from the Kibera Film School, an inspiring organization based in the Kibera slum area of Nairobi. This proved a useful experience for us - as well as, we hope, for him - and subsequently we ran a similar programme, this time with WeOwnTV, as part of our next project, the making of a film to combat the stigma attached to street children.

This second production of the year was made in association with StreetInvest, one of the key organisations involved in the 2011 national head count of street children in Sierra Leone - a project that ended with the finding that nearly 50,000 children under the age of 18 live, or work on the streets of that country, and with a report that ended with the following recommendation –

“The negative stigma surrounding street children must be confronted. The notion that these children are to blame for their circumstances and unworthy of the same opportunities afforded to other children is both misconstrued and dangerous. For those who hold such attitudes the use of street children for cheap labour might easily be considered acceptable. Sensitisation on the causes of street children and the circumstances they endure, targeted towards communities but also public service agencies including the SLP (Sierra Leone Police), could go a long way to recasting the negative attitudes that many have towards these children.”

Our response has been to make the film “Support Wi En Wi Go Bi” that we shall be screening later this evening.

Last year I reported to you that PFP had realised the necessity of running our own distribution programmes in order to maximise on the potential usefulness of our films. It is now with some considerable pleasure that I can report on the first year of this new initiative.

A pilot for the Cambodia distribution of our disability awareness film, “Encourage and I Can” had been run in the previous year and we were now able to move on to Phase Two with considerable success. As well as being used by other NGOs, the film has now been screened on the national television channel 4 times, has been shown repeatedly on eleven different long distance bus routes and has been followed by in-depth discussion in a number of schools.

The distribution of our film “The Time is Now” in Ghana presented more of a challenge, as we had to find and train a local distribution manager from scratch. However, by recruiting a volunteer Distribution Support Officer in this country and sending her out to set up the programme, this was successfully achieved and our new Ghanaian Distribution Manager proved to be excellent. At the end of his six month contract, he had run 36 facilitated screenings reaching over 5,100 people, distributed 350 DVDs to organisations capable of running further screenings themselves, introduced screenings on long distance buses, and got the film shown repeatedly on television including at prime time. Excellent feedback with quotations and actions promised has also been received. The distribution for “The Time is Now”, like that of “Encourage and I Can” has now exceeded our target.

In every country, the problems of distribution are different. In the case of our Malawian agricultural film, “Farming Our Wealth” we face the challenge of how to organise screenings in the most remote communities which are difficult to access and where there is no electricity. Hitherto our partners have been struggling to take out films to these villages with generator, and television but not only is this equipment enormously cumbersome, but the scarcity of diesel has meant that for long periods it has not been possible to organise any screenings at all. The answer we decided might lie in pedal power. For the past year and a half we have been working with a small company called Electric Pedals to produce a backpack cinema that is light, durable, easy to maintain and sufficiently powerful to screen our films to audiences of up to 200. By the end of the year the final piece of equipment was ready, and it has since gone out to Malawi with its creator so that he can train local people in its care and maintenance. I look forward to reporting to you next year on how the project has progressed. However, in the meantime, we shall be able, later this evening, to show you a very short video of the initial trials.

In the UK, we have strengthened our infrastructure, lessened our dependence on one person and taken steps to upgrade our equipment. Volunteers, too, have raised the PFP profile through the increased use of press and social media and have run some lovely fundraising events, which have not only been financially very worthwhile, but also extremely enjoyable.

It is a sign of the growth of PFP that it is no longer possible to give the names of all the people in the UK who, through their support and efforts have made the achievements overseas possible. Recently we were required to record, on a fundraising application, the number of volunteer hours from which PFP benefits, and when we sat down and worked this out, it came to a fantastic total in excess of 9,000 per annum. That is 9,000 hours of skill, thought and labour - freely given to provide crucial, often life-saving information to people in Africa and Asia from whom it can be of enormous benefit.

There is no doubt that PFP is very much a team effort – and in this, I think lies one of our greatest strengths. Whether the individuals concerned are donors, fundraisers and facilitators in the UK, crew and distribution managers who go overseas, trustees or advisors who guide us through it all – their role is vital, and it is their commitment, enthusiasm and hard work that has brought PFP to where it is today.

To everyone involved, I should like to say a very sincere thank you.