Preparing Professionals for the Education of Disabled People. Given as 2 Skype talks with Powerpoint presentations to the Caribbean Inclusive Education Conference at the University of West Indies, Kingston Jamaica on 10th and 11th March 2020 by Richard Rieser

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**Slide 2** What do International Agreements Say UNESCO Salamanca Statement 1994 agreed by 94 Governments and 20 INGOs. Committed to education for all in regular education system. Combats discrimination achieves an inclusive society also effective for the majority. No studies in the world show in properly organised inclusion non-disabled children do worse and quite a lot of evidence do better because of peer support.

**Slide 3** Article 24 UN CRPD. I was lucky enough to represent UK Disabled People’s Movement at Ad Hoc Committee 6,7 & 8, which finalised the negotiation of the UNCRPD. Education was hotly contested, with some of countries promoting choice of special segregated schools. These moves were defeated three times as being contrary to the human rights principle. The wording of Article 24 was largely devised and put forward by the International Disability Caucus which was divided on this issue, but eventually reached the compromise that is Article 24. The need for the UNCRPD had been disputed since 1981-Internatinal Yea of the Disabled. Only with Disability Awareness in Action working on behalf of Disabled People International collected and put forward 2.5 million examples of Disability Discrimination was the ned for the Convention accepted and Mexico and Ecuador put forward a motion at the General Assembly to start the process of developing a Convention that was finally agreed in December 2006 by the United Nations and came into force in 2008 when more than 20 countries had ratified it.

**Slide 4** the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015 these replaced the Millennium Development Goals which had not mentioned disability. The sustainable Development Goals followed a huge global consultation and apply to all countries. Disability is in 7 of the Goals with 11 mentions and by implication is in all of them. The Secretary General has shown the World is falling well behind in implementation by 2030. Goal 4 is to “ensure inclusive quality education and promote life long learning opportunities for all’. Around 30 million disabled children do not attend basic education. A much larger number of disabled young people 270 million have not completed basic and secondary education and many more disabled adults are illiterate. Target 4A requires state parties to make all school infrastructure inclusive. 4.4 eliminate all discrimination; Target 4.2 create Equal Access to Quality Pre-Primary Schools and Target 4.1 free Primary and Secondary education for all.

**Slide 5** UNCRPD Committee, who are elected by the State Parties who have ratified the UNCRPD, currently 181.THE UNCRPD Committee has found, through its reporting system on country reports, that no country was fully implementing Article 24 on Inclusive Education. It resolved to hold a general day of discussion and produce a General Comment (No 4) on Article 24. This is the most important clarification of what is Inclusive Education in International Treaty Law.

**Slide 6** The UNCRPD is based on the paradigm shift from oppressive traditional, medical and charity views of disabled people which view us as objects to be fixed, normalised and cared for to subjects with human rights faced by barriers of attitude, environment and organisation that must be removed and replaced by solutions that include us and give us equal value and rights as disabled people. This cartoon by my fried Micheline Mason ‘You are the Problem’ identifies that everyone should become allies in our struggle for rights rather than fighting each other.

**Slide 7** The transformative way of thinking originated in the Disabled People’s Movement in the 1970s and early 1980s and was adopted in 1981 by the World Congress of Disabled People International in 1981. The Year before 400 disabled people had walked and wheeled out of the World Congress of Rehabilitation International as this was dominated by non-disabled professionals. They became the core of DPI. The focus shifted from trying to fix and normalise through special education to including. The system need to change not the individual and their impairment. To get this enshrined into International Law in 25 years is amazing. The big issue now is implementation which is predicated on bringing about a global shift in mind set.

**Slide 8** Translating this thinking into different types of education it can be seen that exclusion, segregation and various forms of integration do not fulfil this promise. Only inclusive provision where all children receive the support they need, the reasonable accommodations as we move to universal design and barrier free schools not just in the environment but in the curriculum and assessment. We need to move away from Grade systems to a child centred approach, where each child gets what they need to thrive. This means much training for educational professionals, attitudinal change for peers, community and education professional and government moving away from reliance on normative testing. It is not “one size fits all’ but ‘every size accommodated together’.

**Slide 9** School barriers to inclusion. The most important tool to bring about the transformation to inclusion, is that school communities learn to identify barriers to participation and achievement of all students in the locality and work collaboratively in finding and implementing solutions. Crucial to this is to recognise the building of positive relationships, friendship and acceptance in the school and community. I have carried out this activity in 100s of schools around the world and despite the different economic levels and cultures the barriers are very similar. Once the barriers are identified collectively it is easier to develop solution focused thinking to solve them.

**Slide 10** The Canadian Province of New Brunswick has for more than 20 years had a school system where all children go to regular mainstream schools. They have put extra resource into the mainstream saved by not having any segregated schools. They have found that Education Support Teachers who have received additional training should spend 60% of their time working with class teachers to change and review their practice to become more inclusive and effective. Only a quarter of their time is supporting individual disabled students. Each class has increasingly available universal accommodations and the Education Support teachers work with regular teachers on how to use these and other support accommodations to maximise each student’s learning.

**Slide 11** The parents’ dilemma. Should they listen to medical professionals with, often, outdated views about what their disabled child will be able to achieve or should they trust in their love of their child and become good allies in their struggle for human rights and inclusion.

**Slide 12** Maresa MacKeith was quadriplegic, non-verbal and used a wheelchair. The Local Authority had placed he in a special school for severe learning difficulties. Her mother was not sure this was right and searched for a means of communicating with her daughter. When Maresa was aged 12 her Mum found facilitated Communication and once she had learned to support Maresa in using a letter board she said ‘Get me out of here. I’m so bored’. Maresa a communication difficulty, not cognition. She could already read from watching the TV. Eventually after much campaigning Maresa when to a regular mainstream school with a facilitator . She had to point out every letter of her sentences. This took a long time., but with 6x the extra time a 3 hour exam was 18 hours she achieved the best grades the school had ever had. Maresa is now, having got a 2.1 degree in English, a poet and activist founding Quiet Revolution for young non -verbal people. Here is part of one of her poems.