

Transcript of audio report:

interview with Kimberly Middleton, Inclusive Futures global reporter

[Introductory male voice] Hi, and thanks for tuning in. You're listening to an Inclusive Futures audio report, brought to you by our global reporting team.

[Introductory female voice] Hi, I'm Sarah. In this report, I speak to our global reporter for Inclusive Futures, Kimberly Middleton, about her unique role in the initiative.

[Sarah] Hi Kim, please go ahead and introduce yourself and your role.

[Kimberly] Hi! Yeah so I'm Kim and I am the global reporter and storyteller for Inclusive Futures.

So my job is to tell the story of Inclusive Futures which is breaking down the barriers that people with disabilities face. So the work's quite complex and there'll be quite a few challenges along the way, as well as successes. So my role is to explore those complexities and those milestones and that's so that there is some transparency around the work that's being done, some honesty about how difficult some of those problems are to tackle, but also hopefully some useful conversations for people who are either also trying to be inclusive of people with disabilities in their programmes or facing similar challenges perhaps in other areas of work.

[Sarah] So why would you say the programme is so complex?

[Kimberly] I'd say that there were three main areas.

Firstly, disability in itself is quite complex. There are many types of disability; everyone's needs are very different. The barriers that people face and have to overcome are really complex. So not only do they find the systems in life like the education system, healthcare, perhaps work are not inclusive, but also the attitudes that people have in society regularly lead to people being discriminated against or excluded. And of course people with disabilities also have additional barriers in life, so that might be due to their gender, that might be due to living in a rural community, in a marginalised community, being born into a family that is living in poverty. So all of those complexities come together and they need a really concerted effort to overcome them and support people with disabilities and all of that has meant that sadly people with disabilities are one of the groups that are currently being left behind in poverty eradication efforts. So I'd say that's the first reason.

The second thing I'd say that is more complex about Inclusive Futures, is the fact that as well as delivering programmes on the ground it also aims to gather evidence about what works and what doesn't work in disability inclusion. And that's amazing, it'll mean that the programme will produce products and evidence to support other development programmes to be inclusive. But that's an additional strand of work and means working with research partners and academics.

And thirdly Inclusive Futures is this incredible global collaboration. There are partners who are experts in lots of different areas – like development and disability and data and research. And also, really key, Inclusive Futures is run in conjunction with the International Disability Alliance, and with disabled people's organisations and people with disabilities, they're all really front and centre of the work, and integral to being involved in the decisions that are made which will impact on their lives. So all of that collaboration means finding new ways of working, finding new ways of collaborating, which can be tough but will ultimately be brilliant.

[Sarah] So how will you as the global reporter work with the Inclusive Futures citizen reporters?

[Kimberly] Yeah so through the course of our work we come across so many talented people with disabilities who are already really passionate and really eloquent about the rights of people with disabilities and the inclusion issues that they live every day. And that, combined with Inclusive Futures' core values that people with disabilities are front and centre of everything that's done, it seems only right that people with disabilities are the ones that are reporting about what's happening.

So we are in the process of recruiting some reporters and they will be talking about their own experiences, they'll be speaking to other people about their experiences, and the issues affecting their lives and also uncovering views and perceptions of disability, as well as helping us to report on the work that's being done through this amazing global collaboration as part of Inclusive Futures.

So my work as the global reporter will be to complement that, look more at the complexities of what we're working to achieve, the challenges that are being overcome as we work to include people with disabilities.

[Sarah] So final question Kim: where can people read more about the stories you're covering?

[Kimberly] The Inclusive Futures website will be regularly updated with really easily digestible and downloadable audio reports from the citizen reporters and myself, as well as news from our projects so you can sign up to receive audio updates.

So I'd really encourage people to go and take a look at the website and the address for that is inclusivefutures.org

[Introductory male voice] If you'd like to hear more from our citizen reporters, why not visit www.inclusivefutures.org