

RO&Ming with **Lil** Episode 19

Independent O&M in Kiribati – Jess



lil@deverell.net

Introduction to Episode 19

Welcome to Jessica Timmons!

- Independent O&M service provider based in Melbourne
- Business name: I Can Explore

Jess' work portfolio includes:

- Private clients under NDIS
- Disability support work
- Casual, regional O&M work with an O&M agency (pre-COVID)
- Access consultant

Kiribati

Jess loves exploring

- travelled to Kiribati in 2019
- accompanied an independent consultant with low vision
- Kiribati is a nation of atolls (circles of coral islands) straddling the equator and the International Dateline
- Population 110,000, with around half in capital, South Tarawa
- Close to sea level... global warming

Sending long canes - Not a quick fix

- How do I get canes to Kiribati?
- Who will look after them?
- Who will provide the training?
- What department will that go through?
- What professionals are available in country?
- Will they prescribe and train clients?
- Who will do the follow-up?...

Sustainable community development...

1. Aim to make ourselves redundant
2. Need to connect with people who have been before
 - Evaluate what has worked
 - Identify what hasn't worked, and why
 - Understand challenges
3. Spend lots of time in country to map the way forward:
 - meet stakeholders
 - set up networks
 - understand resources
 - profile population
 - identify needs
 - plan for sustainability
 - collaborate with other internationals

... Sustainable community development

4. Adapt resources, expectations, everything to
 - low resource context
 - local culture
 - geographical/environmental challenges
5. Inject technical skills and expertise to meet agreed local priorities
6. Set up for sustainability – who, what, where, when, how
7. Monitor and evaluate progress
8. Schedule follow-up and review

Developing local O&M expertise

- Ultimate aim: do ourselves out of a job
 - need O&M specialists in country
- Train the trainer programs
 - better than nothing, but boom-bust, lacking follow-up
- International O&M specialists (from Australia, New Zealand...)
 - consider O&M + community development qualifications
- Dual qualifications for locals
 - Access to university O&M programs in ANZ?
 - Develop relationship with University of South Pacific in Fiji?
 - Needs to be tailored to local needs, culture, climate, geography, resources
 - Community development workers + O&M
 - Special education teachers + O&M
 - Teacher's aides + O&M
 - Disability workers + O&M
 - Health workers + O&M

International Stakeholders

Need to find out who else is involved:

- Australian international volunteer groups: 6-12 months in country
- Ministry of Health
- DFAT – Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Motivation Australia – Wheelchairs to special school
- Church groups
- Fred Hollows
- CBM
- Universities doing inclusive education

Becoming an independent O&M specialist

Pros

- Flexibility
- More holistic
- Time to follow through with clients
- Time to explore
- Portfolio of roles is interesting
- Don't need a huge caseload

Cons

- Must have experience to work confidently alone
- Lots of unpaid work in getting set up
 - Insurance
 - Referral pathways
 - Promotion
- No easy access to usual human resources, so need to set up:
 - mentors
 - IT support
 - O&M colleagues
 - trouble-shooting
 - second opinions
 - referral
 - debrief

I can explore!

You can contact Jess Timmons at:

- Mobile: 0431 111 105
- hello@icanexplore.com.au
- Facebook: I_can_explore



Conferences earning COMS points

- SPEVI Conference – Celebrating Change!
 - 18-19 January 2021
 - <https://www.speviconference.org.au/>



- International O&M Online Symposium
 - 4-6 February 2021
 - <https://orientationandmobilitysymposium.com/>



Contacts / Resources

- Links and PowerPoint slides for *RO&Ming with Lil*

www.lildeverell.net/resources/roaming-with-lil/

- To discuss VROOM and OMO, offer feedback, suggest a topic, or record an episode together:

Email: lil@deverell.net

Mobile: +61 418 370 312

Credits

- Music
 - *Happy Stroll*, a royalty-free download from Purple Planet Music
- Graphics created by Lil Deverell with
 - PhotoShop lessons and technotherapy from Erin Deverell
 - Photos from
 - An amateur drone photographer from Cornwall, flying over a spaghetti junction in Birmingham (royalty-free)
 - Christine Darwood, a wildlife spotter in the ACT who snapped our sprightly echidna crossing the road (used with permission)
 - Rob Keating, a Canberra-based photographer, who found a weathered wombat crossing the road (purchased from <https://keatingmedia.com.au>)

