



Università Commerciale
Luigi Bocconi

“Employment & Youth with Disabilities: Sharing Knowledge and Practices”

*Report of the
E-discussion on Youth & Disabilities*

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Overview

Organized by the World Bank, June 2004

Objective:

To solicit information on good practices of job creation,
To be used as guidance for including disabled youth in the
development agenda.

Themes:

Week 1: Supply Side
Week 2: Demand Side
Week 3: Other actors
Week 4: Policy-makers

Structure:

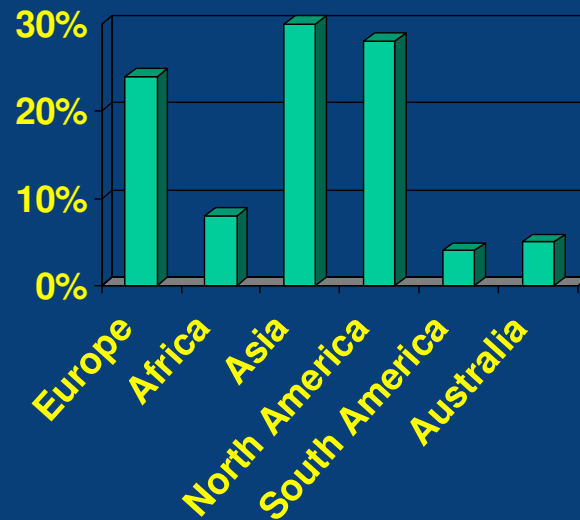
Problems and solutions
Success stories
Lessons learned



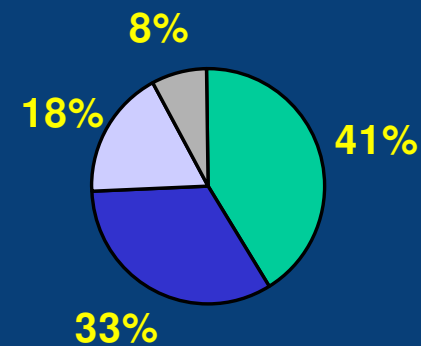
Participants

Overall, there were 181 participants, with a total of 525 messages.

Percentage of participants by geographical area



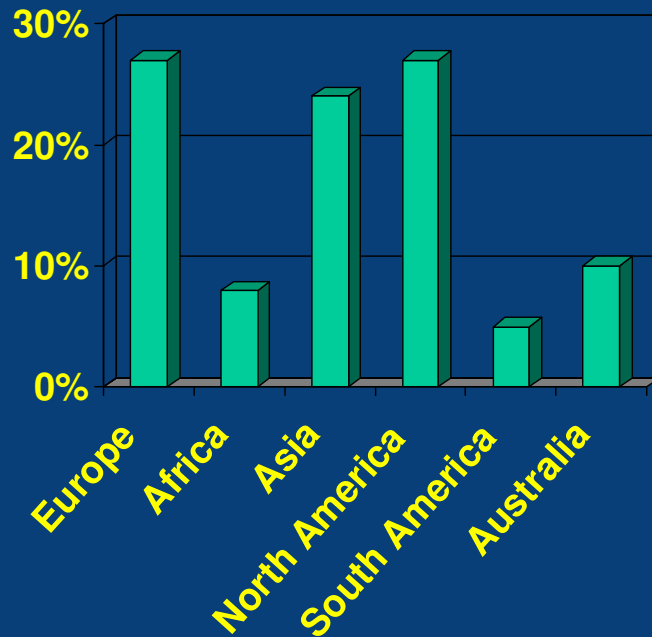
Percentage of messages by week



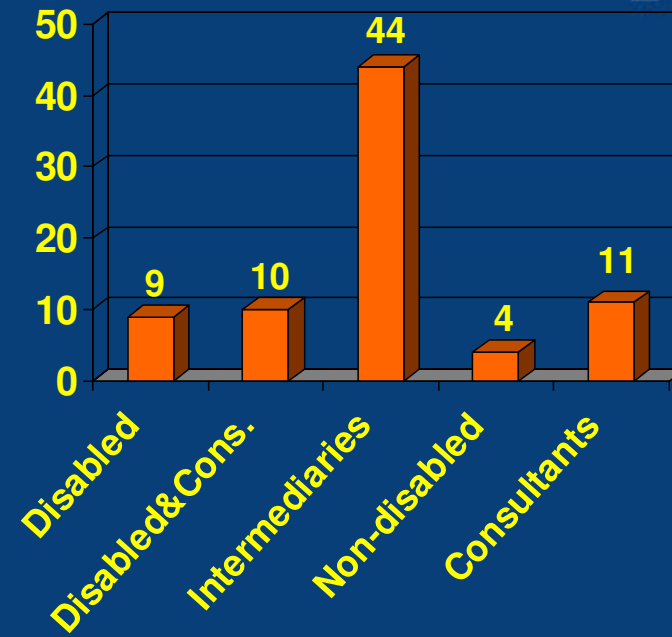


Participants

Percentage of participants by geographical area



Number of participants by category





Major problems to the supply of labour by disabled youth are envisaged in the following areas:

- Society's perspective
- Education system



Society's perspective

“...Government can legislate to create an environment of equal opportunity but the problem of changing perceptions and avoiding misconceptions about lack of ability amongst the disabled ought to be tackled by religious/cultural groups and implanted in youngsters...” (Deon, UK)



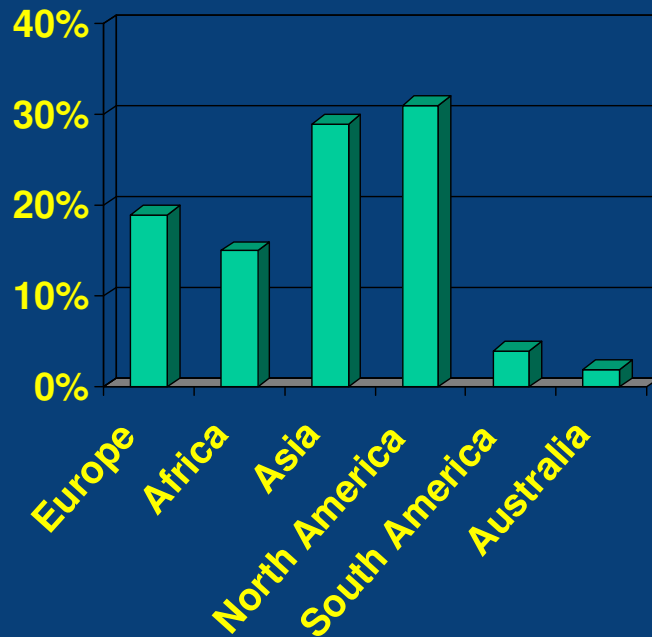
Recommendations

- Stigma and prejudice from employers and society at large have an impact on the process of job seeking. Disabled youth should be active in reversing the vicious circle.
- Disabled people's attitude is key in looking for and keeping a job. Self-confidence, self-esteem and determination can change employers' perception and put forward disabled people's abilities rather than disability.
- Transition plans from learning to work can be very effective in improving the skills and experience of disabled youth. These plans are potentially at very low costs for the education system.

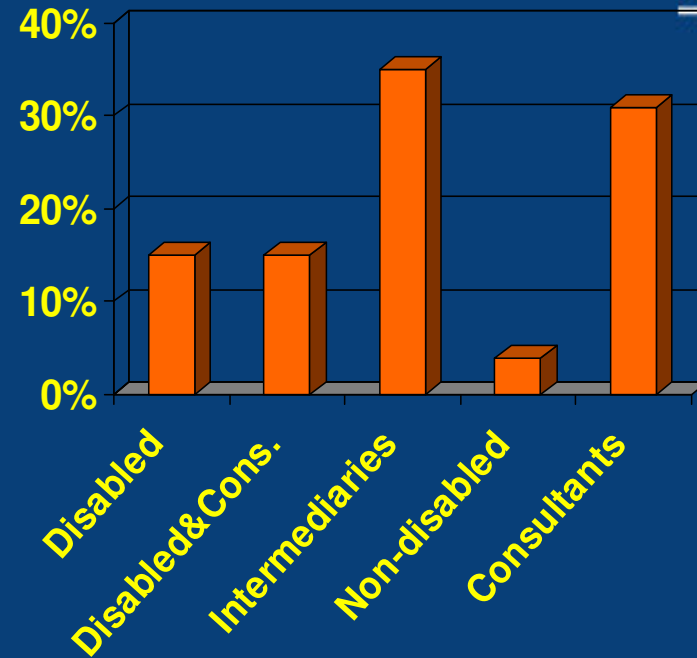


Participants

Percentage of participants by geographical area



Percentage of participants by category





The major findings of the second week concern the following themes:

- Role of intermediaries
- Accommodation
- Legal issues and quotas



Recommendations

- The competence of intermediaries to bridge the needs of both disabled people and employers need to be enhanced
- Disabled people can help employers by informing them on governments' assistance programs aimed at alleviating/sharing the costs of accommodating disabled workers.
- Social protection schemes should aim at protecting disabled people's rights by putting forward their skills and competence, instead of implying that they must have a job because of their disability.



Background

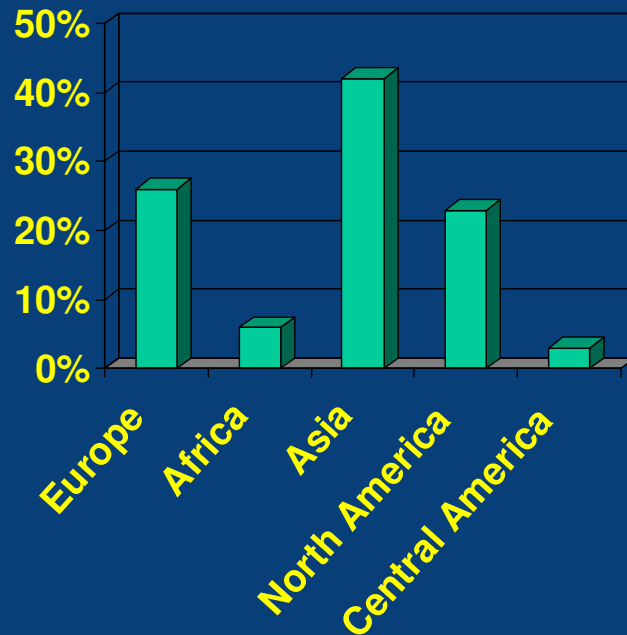
Education of People with Disability

The International Labour Conference in 2000 emphasized that education and training must cover everyone and, “Education and training are a means to empower people, improve the quality and organization of work, enhance citizen’s productivity, raise workers’ incomes, improve enterprise competitiveness, promote job security and social equity and inclusion. Education and training are therefore a central pillar of decent work”

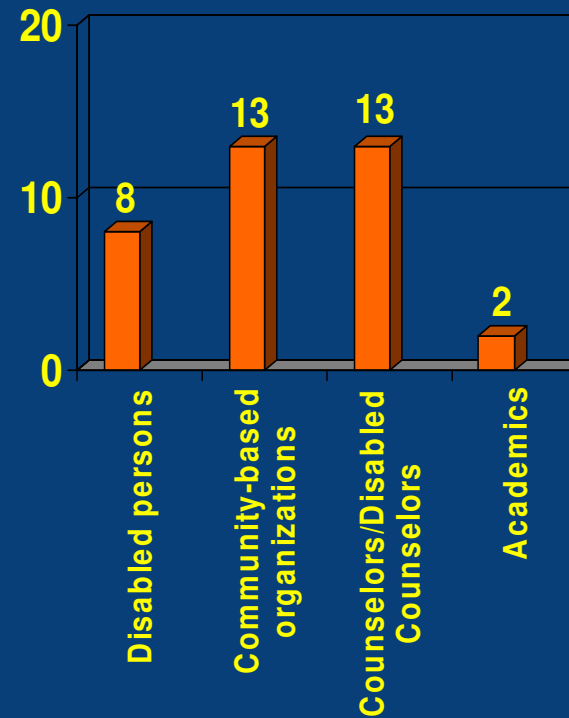


Participants

Percentage of participants by geographical area



Number of participants by category





Problems and solutions related to the role of intermediaries in the employment of disabled youth were analyzed from different perspectives:

- Society
- Education and training
- Government



The Society's Perspective

- Disability is a social issue
- Disability is not a personal problem
- Disability is not only an employment problem
- A disabled person better solves his/her challenges and controls his/her resources



Educational and Training Perspective

- Teaching all children about disability
- Integrating PWD into all levels of education
- Providing new work skills for people who acquired disability during working life
- Enhancing education of children in pastoral nomadic communities
- Rehabilitating disabled adolescents with a history of imprisonment



Governmental Perspective

- Prioritizing the childhood education (educational empowerment)
- Adapting the workplace (accessibility)
- Allowing flexible hiring rules
- Establishing flexible working hours
e.g: in the EU: part time jobs; the promotion of teleworking
- Facilitating new initiatives (mentoring day, micro-financing, and Forums on disability).



Recommendations

- To design services that include collaborative linkages with community.
- To develop models on which to build collaboration on an international level between employers, intermediaries and PWD (Forum).
- Intermediary organisations need to be more actively involved in promoting demand for employment.
- PWD as main actors
- Education empowerment, especially in rural areas.
- Technology as a means to improve skills.
- Success stories as encouragement for youth with disability.

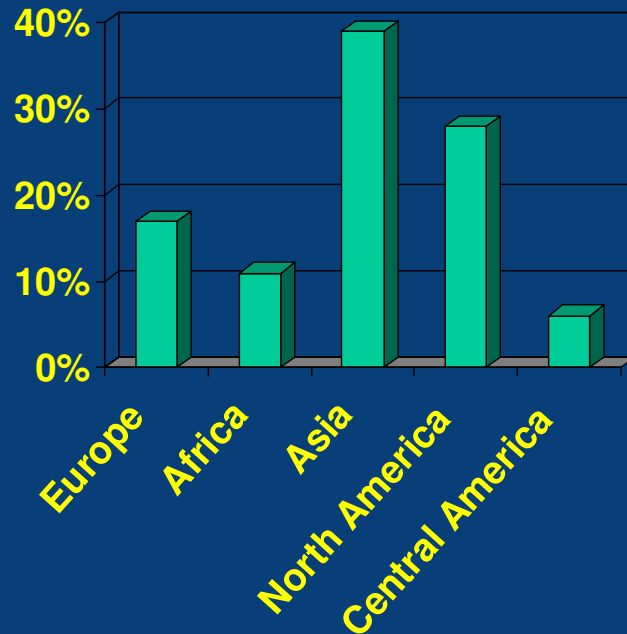


The four week of discussion was centered on the perspectives of policy makers and national and local Governments as it related to transition planning for youth with disabilities for all aspects of adult living and earning.

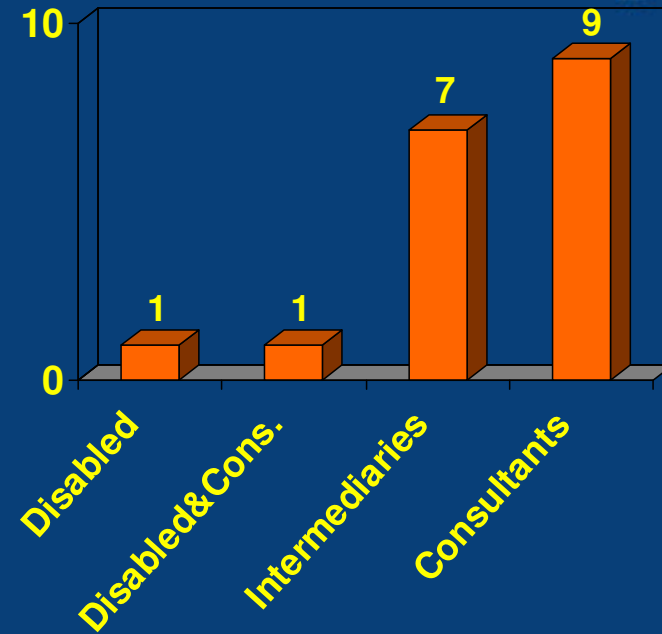


Participants

Percentage of participants by geographical area



Number of participants by category





Topics of discussion:

- Public policy efforts
- Law, statute and/or regulation in transition planning
- Government body which oversees provision of education and transition planning
- Public policy barriers
- Future transition agenda



Public policy efforts

From Belize we learned that Peter August had been actively involved with a few pro-disability organizations that have, from time to time, been lobbying Government to adapt legislations that would give some recognition to persons with disabilities and especially to youths in this category

Peter August states that: *“It has been a rather frustrating experience for many years trying to get Government to understand the plight of persons with disabilities, It has been an uphill struggle with very little achievement. Perhaps parents and care givers have not been sufficiently forceful to advocate for the rights of their children, but it seems generally that this subject bears no priority in the eyes of the legislators and, in fact, there is a lack of concern where Government agencies are concerned.”*

Blackman Duncan from Canada shared that he had been conducting a jurisdictional review to obtain information and gain insight concerning the provision and funding of transition services based on assessed need and individualized approaches with a focus on the provinces and territories of Canada specifically on service options for people with intellectual disabilities.

Blackman Duncan points that *"My general observation has been that services for children and youth are handled by different departments and branches of the provincial governments. **A typical problem is poor communication and coordination amongst these services.** Unfortunately the problem does not appear to have been addressed in any systematic manner and has a lengthy history."*





We learned from Hiljmnijeta Apuk in Kosovo that one of their main efforts was to organize an ‘umbrella’ forum to create a lobby group for disability advocacy and provide coordination and logistical support for the civil sector active in this field. They have also been successful providing direct help on a grass roots level to many people with disabilities in getting education and employment.



Mary Okiaama from Kenya shared that they launched the Kenyan decade for people with disabilities and plan of action this year. She expressed that may have been a little late since the African decade of people with disabilities was launched way back in 1998.

Other than this 2004 plan of action, she stated that not much in terms of public policy arrangements has taken place on the Kenyan scene. **The aim of the plan of action is to find Kenyan solutions to the challenges facing Kenyans with disabilities and place the needs of people with disabilities on the government's social and economic agenda.** The challenges they face are numerous. They hope that the decade will sensitize all their policy makers to the needs of Kenyans with disabilities and be reflected in the policies and development plans.

Law, statute and/or regulation in transition planning



The facilitator for the week, Thomas Golden, shared that in the United States the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides the statutory and stemming regulatory requirements in the United States pertaining to transition planning for youth. This is marginally built on by other federal legislation (e.g. the Workforce Investment Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the Social Security Act) that does seek to create other incentives to promote transition planning although that is not to suggest that the US policy infrastructure could not be greatly improved.

Thomas Golden concludes that: “ *In the US, family members and other advocacy organizations have played a critical role in advocating for and ensuring transition protections in law. Again, that is not to say that we cannot continue to expand the provision of these types of services and supports, but we do have some highly effective practices upon which to build.*”



Government body which oversees provision of education and transition planning

In most countries the governmental units that oversee education for youth should have oversight and responsibility for transition, although many countries expressed that they do not currently have laws governing this area at this time.

It also became clear that minimal efforts have been undertaken to track post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities, although in the United States, some longitudinal tracking has been undertaken as well as state-specific tracking.

Public policy barriers

Several obstacles were noted throughout the discussion. These included:

- lack of education and training for parents to equip them to be effective lobbyists;
- few individuals with disabilities are in positions of authority, elected position and government.





Future transition agenda

From Belize we learned that a few parents groups have been developing and have been bringing some **pressure on Government** as a result of which there have been some attention given to the cause. There have been talks of passing into law some of the policies developed over the years but this may take some time yet.

In the US, family members and other advocacy organizations have played a critical role in advocating for and ensuring transition protections in law. However, this does not mean there is not further room **to continue expanding the provision of these types of services and supports.**

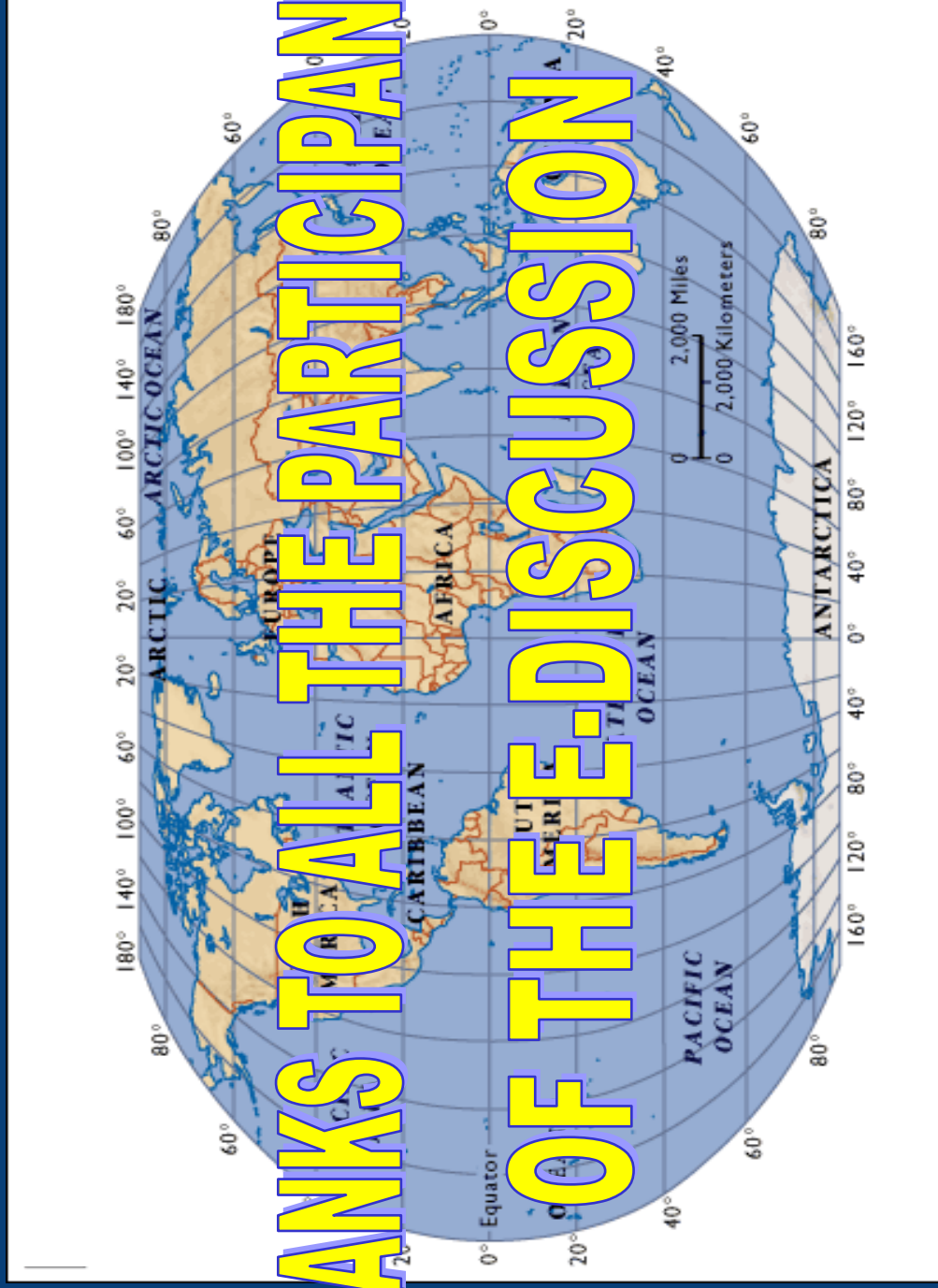


Recommendations

- To equip parents of PWD to be effective lobbyists
- To engage PWD in governmental position
- To enhance the discussion, to share the resources information and ideas related to poverty reduction among PWD in developing countries in order to get Governments to understand the plight of PWD
- To encourage governments to adopt the international acknowledgements of the right of people with disability.

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THANKS TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS
OF THE DISCUSSION



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