

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

Report of the
E-discussion on Youth & Disabilities

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Please keep in mind that this is a **DRAFT** and not the final version. Given that it is a draft, any comments on how it may be expanded or improved would be welcome. You can send them to Rosanna Tarricone at rosanna.tarricone@uni-bocconi.it

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Report of the E-discussion on Youth & Disabilities

Premise

Disability is not simply a medical condition; rather it results from the interaction of physical, mental, or sensory impairments with culture, social institutions, and physical environments. When a person has an impairment which limits some aspect of their functioning it only becomes a disabling condition if they are confronted with barriers to things like health services, education, employment, public services, and infrastructure. These barriers could be physical barriers, programmatic barriers, or cultural barriers, such as the intense stigma that disabled people often face. People with disabilities have been estimated to be around 7-10% of total population. Youth disability refers to youth in the age of 19-24 years old and is of major concern in many countries within the developed and developing world. It is one of major causes of poverty and poverty comes usually from disability. Moreover, it is recognised that people with disability is object of prejudice, social isolation and discrimination.

As World Bank President James Wolfensohn noted in a Washington Post editorial *“Unless disabled people are brought in to the development mainstream, it will be impossible to cut poverty enough by 2015 or to give every girl and boy the chance to achieve a primary education by the same date...goals agreed to by more than 180 world leaders at the United Nations Millemium Summit in September 2002”* (Wolfensohn, 2002).

Despite the vast numbers involved, little is known about disabled populations, especially in low-income countries. Although there are countries which have well established laws and policies, with extensive consultation, monitoring, evaluation and data-gathering mechanisms in place in order to achieve the full participation of disabled persons in the labour force and society, people with disabilities remain underrepresented in mainstream training and employment.

This evidence points to a need to analyse the approach taken, in light of the significantly changed labour market situation throughout the world, arising from globalization and technological change.

In order to do that, an e-Discussion has been organised by the World Bank as the main contributors of a larger study on “Employment & Youth with Disabilities: Sharing Knowledge and Practices”.

The final results of the e-discussion are presented in this report.

BACKGROUND

Definition of Disability

Disabled people are people who, as a consequence of their disability, have reduced capability of activity that causes many difficulties to work, life and studies. The impact of disability onto lif activities may be different and depends upon the specific context such as the environment (urban, rural) and type of country (developed, less developed) .

The most commonly used definition is that of the World Health Organisation in (1976)^[1], which highlights a distinction between impairment, disability and handicap, that is defined as: “An impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function; a disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being; a handicap is a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that prevents the fulfilment of a role that is considered normal (depending on age, sex, and social and cultural factors) for that individual”. It must be considered however that this definition is skewed towards the “medical” side of the concept of disability, whereas the severity of impairment can be affected by causes other than the medical ones.

According to the disability movement, impairment refers to physical or cognitive limitations that an individual may have, such as the inability to walk or speak, whereas disability refers to socially imposed restrictions, that is, the system of social constraints that are imposed on those with impairments by the discriminatory practices of society. Therefore, the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation defined impairment and disability as follows: an “impairment [is] lacking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organism or mechanism of the body”. Disability [is] the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by

¹ World Health Organisation. Document A29/INFDOCI/1, Geneva, Switzerland, 1976.

contemporary organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities”^[2].

According to the United Nations Standard Rules on the equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993:

- The term "disability" summarizes a great number of different functional limitations occurring in any population in any country, of the world. People may be disabled by physical, intellectual or sensory impairment, medical conditions, or mental illness. Such impairments, conditions or illnesses may be permanent or transitory in nature.
- The term "handicap" means the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the life of the community on an equal level with others.
- The use of terminology such as "disability" and "handicap", started in the Seventies, when these two terms were used in an unclear and confusing manner. The consequences of this caused difficulties in policy making guidance and political action. These two terms, “disability” and “handicap”, reflected a medical approach, which ignored the deficiencies of the surrounding society.
- In 1980, the World Health Organization adopted an international classification of impairments, disabilities and handicaps (International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps^[3]), which makes a clear distinction between "impairment", "disability" and "handicap". This classification has been broadly used in rehabilitation, education, statistics, policy, legislation, and economics.

In 1999, the World Health Organization released a new version of its International Classification of Functioning and Disability (the Beta-2 version of ICIDH-2); the aim of this Classification is to “provide a unified and standard language and framework for the description of human functioning and disability as important component of health”^[4]. The Classification organizes information according to three dimensions: body level, individual level, and society level and incorporates a number of environmental factors^[5]. The

² Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation. Fundamental Principles of Disability, London, 1976.

³ World Health Organization, International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps: A manual of classification relating to the consequences of disease (Geneva, 1980).

⁴ WHO August 20, 1999.

⁵ ICIDH-2 complements the International Classification of Disease ICD-10 and now deals with functional states associated with health conditions. ICIDH-2 focuses less than the previous version of ICIDH (International

classification was re-launched in 2001 as the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which serves as the international standard to describe and measure health and disability. Here, the term “functioning” refers to all body functions, activities and participation, while “disability” is similarly an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions.

The Extent and Causes of Disability

The World Bank estimates that disability affects the lives of more than 600 million people globally, the majority living in developing countries^[6]. Inequalities exist, among other, by income-level. The estimates suggest that individuals with disability may account for as many as one in five of the world's poorest. One family in every four has an immediate family member with a significant disabling condition (Elwan, 1999^[7]). The costs to individuals, families and society are huge. The cost of disability to the global Gross Domestic Product is estimated to be between US \$1.37 and US \$1.94 trillion dollars (Metts, 2000^[8]).

Youth with Disability

Disability in youth (i.e. 10-24 years old) is a huge problem as it tends to lead to difficulties in entering productive life. According to the first and most recent Disability Statistics Compendium published by the United Nations Statistics Division in 1990, it was estimated that 180 million young people between the ages of 10-24 have a physical, sensory, or mental health disability. Out of that number, 80 percent live in the developing world. Such restriction to the ability does not allow them to perform normal activities^[9].

Otherwise, estimates of the number of adolescents and young adults who live with a disability vary widely worldwide. Problems of accuracy and reliability of statistics have been raised for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individual with mental health concerns, as well as

Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps. WHO, 1980) on perceived deviations from an ideal human condition and takes account of the environment within which the individual is functioning. It makes reference and links to the UN Standard Rules for Equalisation of Opportunity for People with Disabilities.

⁶ The World Bank.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTDISABILITY>, accessed on November 3, 2004.

⁷ Elwan A. Poverty and Disability: a survey on the literature, background paper for WDR 2000-2001, 1999.

⁸ Metts R. 2000. Disability issues, trends and recommendations for the World Bank. World Bank Social Protection, discussion paper No 0007.

⁹ United Nations, 1990 Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Statistical Office. Disability Statistics Compendium. Statistics on Special Population Groups Series Y, No4, New York: UN

those with physical and sensory disabilities^[10]. Indeed Suris and Blum^[11] conclude their study on the demographics of disabled adolescents, by noting that the lack of homogeneity in definition, survey procedures and data collections “makes international comparisons almost impossible”.

In 2002, the United Nations established an international group, the Washington City Group, to more accurately determine national and international statistics on disability, including those for disabled adolescents and youth^[12].

The UN estimates that by 2005 there will be approximately 1 billion adolescents worldwide^[13]. If both the UNICEF and the World Health Organizations estimates are used that indicate one in every ten of these adolescents is disabled, and then by 2005, the developing world will have roughly 100 million adolescents with disability. To this we must add the number of disabled youth between the ages of 19 and 24 that has been estimated to be around 50 million. Globally, 150 million adolescents and young adults live with a significant disability in the world.

These figures are growing not only because they reflect a rising birth rate, but also because medical interventions will allow disabled infants and children with important disabilities who would not have survived in the past, to grow older, and moreover because some chronic disabling illness can appear later in life. Young people also are at increased risk due to work-related injuries, including motor vehicle accidents, and risk of violence.

Another important point is that disabled young people are mainly the poor^[14,15] and more often males than females, especially in the rural area^[16,17].

¹⁰ Neufeldt A., Albright A., 1998 Disability and Self-Directed Employment: Business Development Models. Ontario Canada: Captus University Publications, International Development Research Centre

¹¹ Suris J, Blum R., 1993: Disability Rates among Adolescent: An International Comparison. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 14:548-52

¹² United Nations, 2002. Washington City Group Meeting: Presentations. Washington, DC: UN and US National Institute of Health Statistics

¹³ United Nations 1990. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Statistical Office. Disability Statistic Compendium. Statistics on Special Population Groups, Series Y, No 4, New York, UN

¹⁴ Elwan A, 1999. Poverty and Disability: A Survey of the Literature. Washington: The World Bank, Social Protection Unit, Human Development Network

¹⁵ Wolfensohn J, 2002. Poor, Disabled and Shut out. *The Washington Post*, Tuesday December 3, Page A 25

¹⁶ United Nations, 1990 Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Statistical Office. Disability Statistics Compendium. Statistics on Special Population Groups Series Y, No4, New York: UN

¹⁷ Harriss-White B, Subramanian S., 199. Ill fare in India. New Delhi: Sage

Causes of Disability

Disability in the developing countries recognizes a different cause from disability in the developed world. Maternal, perinatal and communicable diseases can be the main cause of disability in developing worlds, whereas injuries (e.g. traffic accidents) are much higher in developed countries. Different causes of disability in different countries end up with different mixes of disability and impairments that ask for different programs to be planned and implemented to be effective. Another difference between developed and less developed countries relates to the fact that in developed countries – where life expectancy is normally higher – the number of disabled person-years is also higher than that in less developed countries, thus posing new questions such as how to maintain good quality of life levels in addition to high life expectancy rates. Causes of disability can be prevented. Large-scale prevention programs are mainly realized by immunization programs. While great progress has been made by eradicating poliomyelitis and measles, non-communicable eye diseases, such as glaucoma and cataracts, are insufficiently prevented. Vitamin deficiencies are nowadays a minor problem due to large-scale interventions. Progress on preventing chronic non-communicable diseases, injuries, and mental illnesses require a lot of effort. More studies are needed to understand psychiatric diseases and the resulting disability.

Because of the widespread conflicts worldwide, soldiers, civilians and refugees are vulnerable to potentially disabling diseases and psychological consequences. People already disabled are particularly vulnerable to deteriorating health under the precarious conditions caused by war. Health care and social assistance systems break down during conflict, thus health deteriorates, and some conditions - including those not necessarily related to conflict - can become disabling. Preventive programs such as pre-natal and immunization services, as well as curative measures for ill children, are interrupted, hence they are more prone to face disability as they age.

For this reason, disability is now increasingly recognized as a key development issue and its importance in relation to poverty, human rights, and the achievement of internationally agreed upon development goals is receiving recognition.

Limited Knowledge on Disability

Despite the vast numbers involved, little is known about disabled populations. Outside specific data sets collected from developed countries where statistics for specific rehabilitative or educational services provided to disabled groups is available, little information exists. This is particularly true for the developing world. Elwan (1999)^[18], referring to the current lack of knowledge, ably notes that "literature on poverty and disability in developing countries tends to be of a generalized nature, focusing on what is generally known about health, disabilities, poverty and vulnerable populations. Much of it relies on anecdotal evidence and case studies". Moreover, the studies from developing countries have concentrated exclusively on the epidemiology of specific causes of disability or on general discussions of the broad demographics of disability.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that something is changing at this regard and that empirical studies – also in many developing countries – are being launched aimed at providing evidence about the disability issue. Further and more accurate data can therefore be available in the next future.

Education of People with Disability

The avenue for disabled people to education opened when society started to realize that they were capable of learning. In the late eighteenth century, schools and institutions for the blind and the deaf emerged in Europe, and the achievements of the people in these schools improved society's perception of the capabilities of disabled people. Institutions and schools for physically disabled, however, emerged much later, i.e. in the 1920s and 1930s (Metts, 2000^[8]). Up to now, however, disabled people receive less education and leave school with fewer qualifications than others.

Poverty and disability are often linked; this situation can start in early childhood. Indeed, people born with a disability are often, because of poverty, unable to access medical and rehabilitation services, and school. This contributes to a perpetuation of disability and poverty throughout the lifecycle. Youth who acquire a disability later in childhood, are often dismissed from school. Lack of education is a problem for most disabled young people in the

¹⁸ Elwan A, 1999. Poverty and Disability: A Survey of the Literature. Washington: The World Bank, Social Protection Unit, Human Development Network

developing world. Lack of schooling may reinforce the belief that such children can not learn; that such children should not be put through the stress of learning. Physical barriers, such as stairs, often make school buildings inaccessible. In addition, lack of trained teachers, and appropriate teaching materials limits access to education for millions of disabled children.

Gender inequities have been found in education to young people with disability. As Russo^[19] notes, cultural bias against women in general makes many families and educational systems less willing to allocate resources and opportunities to all female students. In contrast, Miles in a study in rural Pakistan found 22% of all disabled children, without any evidence of gender bias, had received some schooling within the general classroom setting and reports similar observations from Sri Lanka^[20].

Moreover, there has been growing interest in "inclusive schooling practices" with UNESCO and UNICEF promoting greater integration into the general classroom setting. However, most of these efforts have been directed towards younger children, not towards disabled adolescents. Attention must be paid toward this age-group, since without proper schooling millions of these young people end up on the street, unemployed and often involved in crime, sex work and drugs. In Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, there are extensive educational systems for most children with disabilities from early childhood through late adolescence. Some nations integrate these adolescents into general classrooms. Others provide specialized classes and offer training in social and job skills to help in the transition to adulthood. These programs have varying degrees of success.

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"^[21].

¹⁹ Russo H.2003 Education for All: A Gender and Disability Perspective. Washington: the World Bank.

²⁰ Miles M. 1986 Children with Disability in Ordinary Schools: an Action Study of Non-Designed Educational Integration in Pakistan. Peshawar: National Council of Social Welfare

²¹ ILC. Eighty-eight Session, Geneva, 2000. Conclusions concerning human resources training and development

Employment of People with Disability

The employment rate of persons with disability tends to be considerably lower than that of non-disabled people in any country, regardless of the overall employment rate. In Sweden, for example, where unemployment rates are relatively low, the rate for disabled people was 9 per cent in 1998 compared to 5 per cent of non-disabled people (O'Reilly, 2003^[22]). In countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the unemployment rates can be nearly double those of non-disabled persons, and as high as 87 per cent (ILO, 2003^[23]).

Disabled Youth and Employment

Employment is a problem for all adolescents and youth. Youth unemployment has skyrocketed worldwide over the past decade to some 88 million, according to a new study by the International Labour Office (ILO), reaching an all time high with young people aged 15 to 24 now representing nearly half the world's jobless^[24]. Formal education for most young people ends by mid-adolescence, after which most males and many females are expected to work outside the home. Young people worldwide are at higher risk for unemployment, partial employment or full employment at lower wages than adult workers, and adolescents with disabilities are at even greater risk.

Coming on to the job market with poor education and limited skills, young people with disability have difficulties competing. Physical or intellectual impairments may limit their job options. For most, social prejudice makes employers unwilling to hire them. Unemployment and underemployment for the disabled youth will be higher than for all other young people. Rates of unemployment among the general adult disabled population vary from country to country but on average, tend to be at 40-60% higher than for the general non disabled population^[25]. This is true even in developed countries with well-organized skills training programs to help in the transition from school to work^[26]. The ILO in 2003 estimated the unemployment rate among people with disabilities in the developing world was up to 80% in

²² O'Reilly, Arthur. 2003. *The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities*. Geneva: ILO.

²³ ILO. 2003. *Proceeding of the ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training and Employment of People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*. 14-16 January 2003. Bangkok: ILO.

²⁴ International Labour Organization. Press Release ILO/04/36, 11 August 2004.

²⁵ Elwan A, 1999. *Poverty and Disability: A Survey of the Literature*. Washington: The World Bank, Social Protection Unit, Human Development Network

²⁶ Metts R. 1999. *Disability Issues, Trends and Recommendations for the World Bank*. Washington: World Bank

some countries. Moreover, even when they enter the work place, adolescents with disabilities often find little possibility of error. If they do not succeed in apprenticeship or are fired from their first job, they are labelled unemployable.

The female situation is even more difficult, unemployment among disabled young women averages 50% higher than unemployment among comparably educated disabled young men.

Young people with disability are often excluded from the activities that build fundamental social, educational and economic skills. Even when they have received a good education, they take a longer time to find a position, have less job security and less prospect of advancement with that job.

Another important link with the productivity of disabled people is health care. If health services do not allow access to young people with disabilities, they will have bad health and low productivity. Lack of access to general medical care is also reported in several countries^[27]. Health care facilities are simply inaccessible - stairs block access for wheelchair users or there is a lack of sign language interpreters, making medical consultation meaningless for deaf people.

Decreased productivity for disabled young people is not attributable only to lack of access to rehabilitative care and technologies. Health care workers often refuse to provide basic vaccinations or reproductive health information to disabled young people because it is felt that these people do not have the need for such information or do not have the right to utilise limited resources^[28].

Principle International Legal Instruments and Policy Initiatives

²⁷ Altman, B.M. (1981) Studies of Attitudes toward the Handicapped: The Need for a New Direction. *Social Problems*,28: 321-37.

²⁸ Groce N, 2003. HIV/AIDS and People with Disabilities. *The Lancet* 361:1401-1402.

Several international acknowledgements of the right of people with disability have been made by various international organizations. The United Nations (UN), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU), provide legal instruments and policy initiatives concerning the right to work of people with disabilities.

ILO Conventions and Recommendations

The first international instrument containing provisions relating to the vocational rehabilitation of workers with a disability was adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1925 (Recommendation No 22), a few years after the establishment of ILO. The recommendation set out principles which should be taken into account in determining compensation payment for industrial accidents. It also recommended that “the vocational re-education of injured workmen should be provided by such means as the national laws or regulations deem most suitable”.

In 1944, the International Labour Conference adopted a comprehensive Recommendation (No 71). The ILO stated that disabled workers, “whatever the origin of their disability, should be provided with full opportunities for rehabilitation, specialized vocational guidance, training and retraining, and employment on useful work”. Even if this Recommendation did not refer to gender differences, it underlined the “complete equality of opportunity” for men and women.

Afterwards there have been several legal products adopted by ILO to facilitate employment of disabled people. In 1946, Convention No 77 and 78 and Recommendation No79 established the corrected medical measurements for vocational guidance and rehabilitation of people with disability. Recommendation No 83 and Convention No 88 were released in 1948, calling for special measures to comply with the needs of workers with disability.

Recommendation No. 99, adopted in 1955, has become one of the most important international instruments in the field of employment for people with disability. It served as the basis for national legislation and practice in relation to vocational guidance, vocational training, and placement of disabled persons.

In 1958, ILO again emphasized its anti-discrimination stance through the adoption of Convention No 111 and Recommendation No 111 concerning Discrimination in Employment

and Occupation, which outlined policies of non-discrimination in the equal opportunity and treatment in employment.

Due to the increase of technological changes, in 1965 ILO issued a Resolution concerning techniques used in the rehabilitation and training of disabled persons for new forms of employment. This is followed by ILO Convention No 128 in 1967 which requires provision of rehabilitation services to training a disabled person for resumption of previous activity or the most suitable alternative activity having regard to aptitudes and capacity.

In 1968, with the Resolution of the International Labour Conference concerning disabled workers, ILO confirmed its commitment in progressing policy on vocational rehabilitation and in eliminating all discrimination. ILO Convention No142 in 1975 called on Member States to develop comprehensive policies of vocational guidance and training, linked with public employment services.

Finally, in 1983 ILO adopted its landmark Convention No 159 and the accompanying Recommendation No 168 which set out a number of fundamental principles to underlie vocational rehabilitation and employment policy, and detailed measurements which should be taken to promote equitable employment opportunities.

United Nations Declarations

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, although disability is not mentioned as a protected category. Then, in 1966, UN General Assembly adopted two Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights. The first Covenant contains a number of important provisions relating to work and equal employment opportunity, the second protects against discrimination.

Recognizing the importance of the issue, the United Nations subsequently adopted several initiatives regarding employment for disabled people. In 1971, the UN General assembly proclaimed a Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons which underline their right to perform productive work. In 1975, the UN General Assembly proclaimed a

Declaration on Rights of Disabled Persons. The Declaration affirmed that people with disability had the same civil and political rights as other people.

In 1993, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Person with Disabilities were adopted by UN General Assembly. The Standard Rules are a set of non-compulsory guidelines; employment is covered by Rule 7, which calls on all States to take various measures to ensure that people with disability have equal opportunities.

Council of Europe Recommendations

At the regional level, Europe has also initiated common policies on employment for disabled people. The Council of Europe in 1950 adopted the European Convention on Human Rights. However, this Convention has been criticized because the main discrimination provision does not include disability among the ground on which discrimination is prohibited. In 1986, a Recommendation was adopted “to take appropriate measures to promote fair opportunities for persons with disabilities in the field of employment and vocational training”. In 1992, the Committee of Ministers adopted the Council of Europe Recommendation concerning people with disabilities. This document includes sections on prevention, health education, education, training and vocational guidance, social integration and environment, employment, economic and legal protection, statistics and research.

National Policies Addressing Employment for People with Disability

To increase employment for people with disabilities, governments of many countries have taken various measures, from obligatory to non-obligatory regulations, from facilitation to incentive-type measures for employers, disabled persons as well as their representative organizations. While such policies dated back much earlier in several countries, especially the now industrialized countries, some others have been encouraged or re-emphasized by ILO Convention No. 159 of 1983. The Convention requires Member States, in accordance with national conditions, practice and possibilities, to formulate, implement and periodically review a national policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons. Such policy should: (1) promote employment opportunities for people with disability in the open labour market, (2) be based on the equal opportunity between disabled workers and

workers generally, and (3) involve consultation with representative organizations of employers and workers, as well as those of and for disabled persons. As of October 2004, 76 countries have ratified the Convention.

As many as 40 out of 189 UN Member States have enacted national **anti-discrimination legislation** in the year 2000, which protects the rights of people with disability for equal employment opportunity (O'Reilly, 2003). Anti-discrimination legislation assumes that specific measures are needed to promote the employment of disabled people, since they are able to compete for jobs provided the environment in which they do so does not discriminate against them because of their disability. The enactment of such law, however, does not necessarily erase the gap of employment rates between people with disability and those without. In Australia, for example, the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act was put in place in 1992 to prohibit discrimination on the ground of disability in work and employment; however in 1998 the participation rate for males with a disability was only about 60 per cent, compared with 90 per cent for persons without a disability. Such gaps prevail in other countries as well.

Clearly, besides laws, operational measures are needed to create greater employment opportunities for disabled persons. **Quota systems** are an example of measures that have been taken by several countries in order to ensure that a number of jobs are available for people with disability. Such systems call for employers to employ a minimum percentage of disabled workers; they have long been implemented by many European countries and recently introduced in several Asia Pacific and African countries.

There are three types of quota systems: (i) legislative recommendation with no sanction, (ii) legislative obligation without effective sanction, and (iii) legislative obligations with sanction. The latter has attracted most interest from countries which have sought to introduce or modify a quota system in the 1980s and 90s (O'Reilly, 2003^[22]). An example of this system is found in Germany, where all public and private employers with at least 16 employees are obliged to provide employment for disabled persons as many as 6 per cent of total employees. Fines are imposed if the quota is not met, and the funds collected are used to promote rehabilitation and employment of severely disabled persons. However, a recent study for the European

Community, which looked at employment policies for disabled persons in 18 industrialized countries, found no examples where quota systems achieved their targets. An explanation to this phenomenon might be the one that is suggested by Waddington (1996), as referred to by O'Reilly, that quota systems are based on the idea that the protected group of workers are less capable than other workers; hence employers will try to evade their obligations to employ such workers.

To encourage employers to hire people with disability, governments have taken **persuasion measures** in the forms of information and awareness raising campaigns, awards, codes of good practice, etc. Although useful, these measures are no substitute for legislation and other obligatory measures in promoting equal opportunity and treatment for workers with disabilities.

Governments have also intervened by providing services and supports to disabled persons to facilitate them in finding and retaining jobs. Workers with disabilities tend to fall behind other job seekers, particularly when unemployment rates increase. Often this is due to their inability to compete on the basis of technical skills or qualifications. This is why **training for employment** for people with disability is essential. Vocational training, directed to identifying and developing human capabilities for a productive and satisfying working life, can be delivered in various institutions and methods such as schools and technical colleges, vocational training centres, distance learning, etc. It may also take the forms of formal apprenticeships and on-the-job training. The trend is now to shift from segregated system to mainstream vocational training. The Australian programme Bridging Pathways is one example of a national initiative to bring people with disabilities into mainstream training programs by retraining staff, appointing disability coordination officers and conducting research. In Chinese province of Heilongjiang, thousands of people with disabilities have been trained with skills in agriculture through the Green Certificate Training Programme, where most trainees start business after completing the training (Perry, 2003^[29]).

Other reasons why participation rates among people with disability are lower compared to other workers are lack of information on work opportunities and reluctance to register as

²⁹ Perry, Debra A. (ed). 2003. *Moving Forward: Toward decent work for people with disabilities – Examples of good practices in vocational training and employment from Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: ILO.

having a disability. **Employment-related services** have been provided by governments in many countries, including vocational guidance, placement service, information on training and employment opportunities, job search training which encompasses preparation of resumes, interview techniques, presentation skills, etc. Japan, for example, assigns an employment promotion guidance officer to guide and assist in job placement of disabled job seekers at all public employment offices. Hong Kong applies a selective placement service, which assesses and counsels job candidates and provides placement assistance and three-month follow-up services. The placement service also encourages co-worker mentoring, awareness training and technical assistance for employers (ILO, 2003).

Provision of **financial supports** is another measure taken by governments to encourage employment for workers with disabilities. One of the most common types of such supports to employers is wage subsidies to cover a shortfall in productivity. In Austria, for example, subsidies are provided up to 80 per cent of the full wage in the first year of employment. Other types of financial supports include grants towards training costs, grants for tutorial assistance, tax credits in respect of each new disabled worker, etc. Grants may also be available to disabled persons who wish to set up their own business or to establish a cooperative. In Italy, social cooperatives with a workforce of which at least 30 per cent are persons with disabilities may be exempted from social insurance contributions. Financial assistance may also be available to third-party agencies to assist disabled persons in preparing and training for employment. In the United States, grants may be available to States to establish programmes of technology-related training, access and assistance, and awards can be made to private agencies which deliver assistive technology training and services at local level (O'Reilly, 2003^[22]).

Supports may also be given in non-financial forms, thus rather as **technical and personal supports**, such as assistance in arranging for a special driving licence, technical aid and devices, personal assistance to assist in relation to personal hygiene or transport, provision of readers for workers with visual impairment and signers/sign language interpreters during interviews or in the workplace, etc. In Denmark, for example, personal assistants can be hired to assist disabled persons in occupational tasks (OECD, 2003^[30]).

³⁰ OECD, 2003. *Policy Brief: Disability Programmes in Need of Reform*. March 2003.

In November 2001, ILO adopted the Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace. It was intended to guide employers to adopt a strategy in managing disability-related issues in the workplace. Although is primarily addressed to employers, the document notes that “governments play an essential role in creating a supportive legislative and social policy framework and providing incentives to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Moreover, the participation and initiative of people with disabilities is important for the Code to be achievable”. Conceptually, **disability management** is a means that facilitates recruitment, advancement, job retention and return to work of persons with disabilities. At the operational level, this is often a process that is integrated into human resource development practices promoting entry and advancement of disabled workers as well as prevention, rehabilitation and safe-return-to-work interventions to address workplace injury and disability.

A key to success of any kind of policy measure is its acceptance by the target groups. A **consultation mechanism**, enabling representative organizations of employers and workers as well as those of and for disabled persons to be consulted on the implementation of national policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment should therefore be established. This is also directed by the ILO Convention No. 159 and Recommendation No. 168, which states that these organizations should be able to contribute to the formulation of policies on the organization and development of vocational rehabilitation services, and makes a number of recommendations about the form their participation might take. Such consultations have been seen in place in many countries. In Austria, Czech Republic, France, Mauritius, Sweden and UK, for example, permanent councils or committees have been set up involving organizations of and for disabled persons and are consulted on the implementation of national policy. In other countries such as Chile, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, the Philippines and Tunisia, all three representative groups are responsible on various bodies for drafting or implementing policies and programmes (O’Reilly, 2003^[22]).

Another very important element in policy implementation is **monitoring and evaluation**. For this, an **information** system should ideally be in place, to provide baseline as well as

subsequent information on the employment of people with disabilities. Unfortunately, difficulties exist not only at the tier of generating information on a regular basis for monitoring and evaluation purposes, but more profoundly even at the primary stage of establishing baseline information, among other due to the inconsistency of the definition of “people with disability”. There are wide divergences in how disability is defined, not only between countries, but also between Ministries and programmes within countries. With a few notable exceptions (USA, Canada, UK, Australia and Sweden), the data required for policy and programme development, planning, monitoring and evaluation at country level are inadequate. ILO (2003^[23]) also acknowledges this problem as prevalent in Asia Pacific region.

O’Reilly^[22] (2003) also mentions that the general need for better data is being reinforced by growing and competing demands on public expenditure. Competition for resources exists not only within the overall context of national economic policies, but also between disability policies (prevention versus rehabilitation versus equal opportunity, for example) and within the disability employment area itself. For instance, should available resources be allocated to train all those who have a disability, concentrated in skill training for those most likely to get jobs, or devoted to those most in needs?

According to OECD (2003^[30]), the average per capita cost for vocational rehabilitation and training is low compared to the average cost of disability benefits. Given that such programmes help secure permanent employment, the investment should quickly pay for itself. Thus it is more beneficial for countries to give priorities to the provision of vocational rehabilitation and training, as well as other measures to promote employment for people with disabilities, over generous disability benefit schemes that are often found to discourage employment. The results of their study suggest that disability benefit systems and their rules strongly influence the number of people in disability benefits; it matters, especially, how generous the disability benefits are. On the other side of the coin, sadly, the outflow from disability programmes to a job is virtually nil in all of the OECD countries.

Numerous countries still perceive the issue of disability in population from the welfare approach, rather than as a human right issue which calls for, among other, equal employment opportunity. ILO study in 14 countries in Asia-Pacific region, for example, indicates this by

showing that in more than half of the studied countries the responsibility for disability issues fall under the ministries of social welfare, which may include other issues such as health, but not labour, as compared to the rest of the countries (ILO, 2003^[23]).

It is of course not the intention of this summary to suggest abandoning altogether the disability benefit schemes, as there are people who are desperately in need of financial support and are not able to work. However, more efforts should be directed toward facilitating disabled persons to find and retain decent jobs. At the same time, mutual obligations should be introduced. If a society makes a sincere effort to help disabled persons participate in employment, it is only fair that disabled persons are expected to take advantage of the opportunities, by making the appropriate effort to enter the labour market.

The ILO study in the Asia-Pacific region also demonstrates the lack of implementation of the growing bulk of legislation. Thirteen of the countries have some kind of disability legislation in place; the fourteenth, Cambodia, has a draft law (as of January 2003). Mechanisms for implementation of legislation, including disability councils, strategic plans and partnerships are unlikely to be in place. And, even when such structures are in place, their effectiveness is questionable. The system weakens further when practices and services are examined. Therefore, the outcomes are not sufficient to allow people with disabilities to compete in the very competitive labour market that is facing employees in the region. It is likely that this problem also occurs in other regions of the world.

OECD^[30] (2003) found a close relationship between employment rates of disabled people and those of non-disabled people, which suggests, first, that general labour market forces have a strong impact on the employment of people with disabilities, and, second, that general employment-promoting policies also foster the employment of special groups in the labour force. In the abundance of labour supply, employers tend not to reach out to new groups of employees, especially where additional costs such as insurance, transportation and infrastructure would be involved. Creation of jobs, inevitably, should become the main priority of governments facing such situation.

To sum up, governments have taken and should continue to take the leading responsibility in dealing with the issue of disabilities. Full participation of and equality for disabled persons in the workplace should be fostered through a variety of measures, some of which have been described above, along with the introduction of general employment-promoting policies. It is of ultimate importance to create an environment which enables communication and cooperation among the different actors involved, i.e. government as policy makers, employers, workers in general, and disabled persons, to ensure that any policy measure is well-balanced and therefore, could be well-implemented.

There are abundant legal frameworks and policies at the international as well as national levels that address the issue of employment for people with disability in general. However, there are less that focus only on disabled youth.

Overview of the e-discussion

The World Bank Human Development Network (Disability & Development Team and Children & Youth Team), and the World Bank Institute's Knowledge Sharing Team have organised and hosted an e-mail based electronic discussion on the issue of "Employment for Disabled Youth". The focus was on the good practices of job creation for disabled youth worldwide.

The e-discussion is designed to solicit information on good practices for job creation to be used as guidance for including disabled youth in the development agenda for all of those that have a stake in the development process, including development agencies, World Bank staff, government officials, civil society organizations and policy-makers. The e-discussion is an important component of a study on "Employment & Youth with Disabilities: Sharing Knowledge and Practices", organized and coordinated by the World Bank, in collaboration with Bocconi University (Milan), Cornell University (NY), the Employer's Forum on Disability, Workability International and the participation of the ILO. The e-discussion lasted one month and was split into four weeks. Each week was assigned a specific theme and was moderated by one of the partners collaborating to the above mentioned study.

The first week (June 1-4) was about Supply (disabled youth looking for a job) and was moderated by Bocconi University, Milan. The second week (June 7-11) was on Demand (employers offering a job to youth disabled) and was moderated by Employer's Forum on Disability. The third week (June 14-18) focused on "Other actors" (parents/families, schools, training centers, DPOs and others) and was moderated by Workability International. The last week (June 21-25) was about "Policy-makers" (national and local governments) and moderated by Cornell University.

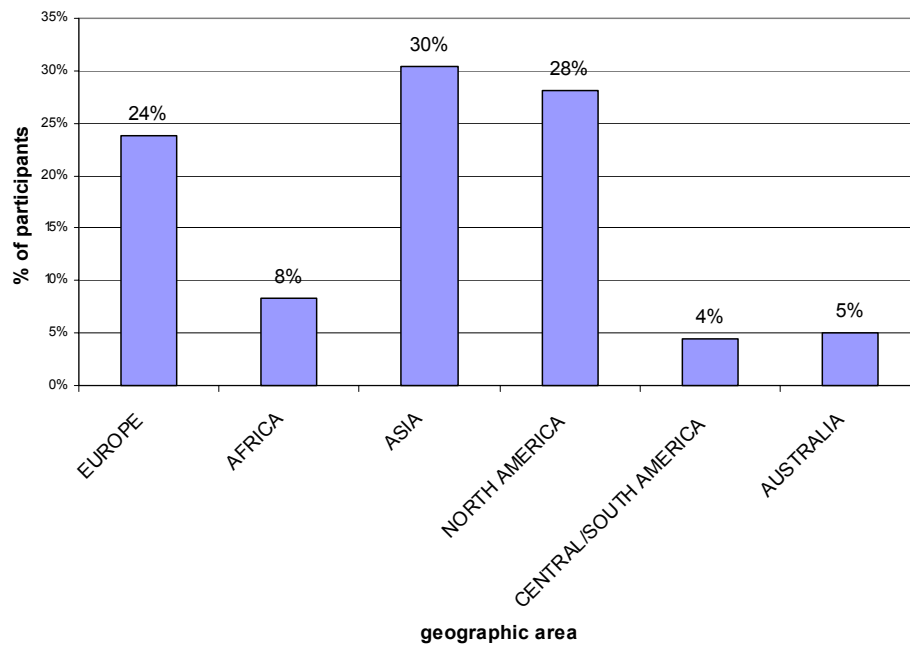
In order to structure the participants' contributions around the main themes of the four weeks, they have been invited to consider the following aspects:

- 1) Problems & solutions
- 2) Success stories
- 3) Lessons learned

Nevertheless, while analysing the contributions in each of the four weeks, it was not always possible to respect the above repartition. In this case, the analysis mainly aimed at putting forward as many participants' contributions and opinions as possible.

Overall 181 participants contributed to the e-discussion for a total of 525 messages. Figure 1 below shows participants by geographic area. More than 80% of total participants come from Asia, North America and Europe:

Figure 1. Participants to the e-discussion by geographic area



Week 1: Supply Side

Section 1. Introduction

The first week of the e-discussion on Youth & Disabilities was focused on the Supply Side. The aim was that of gathering information and opinions as to how the “supply” side of the labour market, or “disabled youths looking for a job”, appears to be across the world whether in the formal or informal market.

Advice was given to participants on how to structure their contributions as to fulfil the above mentioned aims. They were asked to discuss the following specific aspects:

1. Problems & solutions (i.e. what are the major barriers/problems that disabled youth encounter when looking for a job; what are the possible solutions you are aware of or you just think could help overcoming the barriers).
2. Success stories (i.e. what are some of the success stories you know and want to share; what are the challenges faced; based on the success stories, what key lessons could be used as a model to share with others and/or as possible guidance for the future).
3. Lessons learned (what are the suggestions you would make to your own "group" and to other groups (i.e. employers to employers and to youth, schools/families/NGOs, policymakers).

The analysis of contributions has been however done based upon problems and solutions. Some success stories have been almost integrally reported as they gave new insights to the issue of the supply side. Final recommendations include what the participants have indicated in terms of lessons learned.

In the first week nearly 200 messages addressed the issue of the supply side. The messages came from 83 participants from all over the world. Nevertheless, North-America and Europe were the places mostly represented as reported in figure 2 below.

As to the participants' characteristics, they have been grouped into five classes according to how they introduced themselves when entered into the e-discussion (figure 3):

1. Disabled people
2. Disabled people & Consultant
3. Non disabled people
4. Intermediaries
5. Consultants

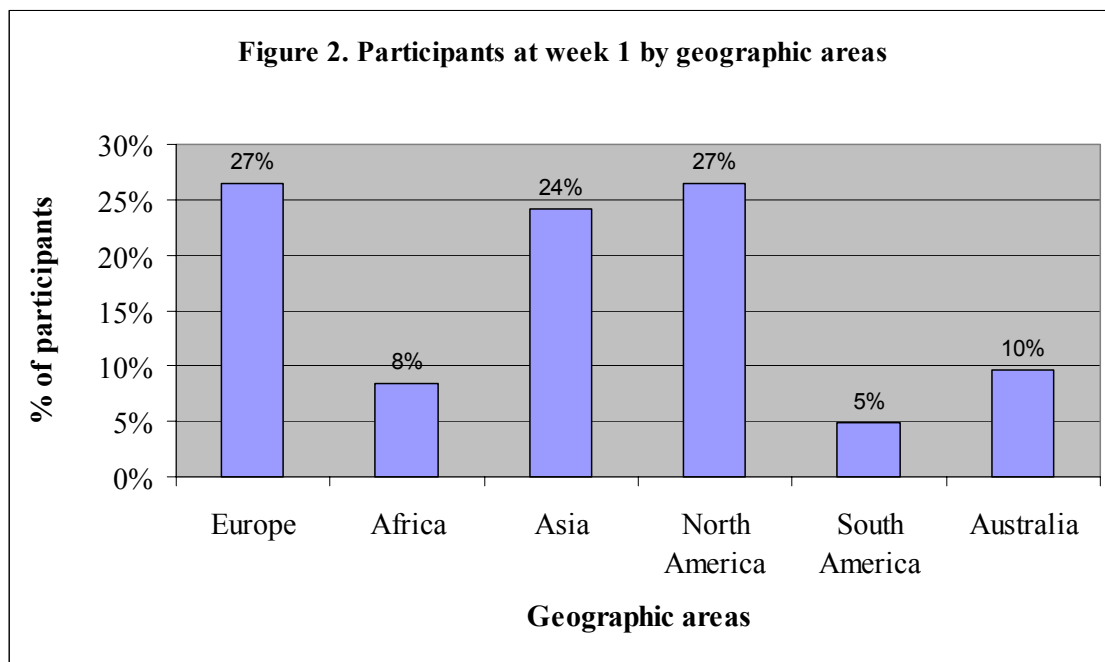
In the first group there are participants who contributed to the discussion as “disabled people”, They not always belonged to the young age, but all provided evidence of how being disabled can influence their choices in terms of studying choices and professional activity. Some of the success stories come from them.

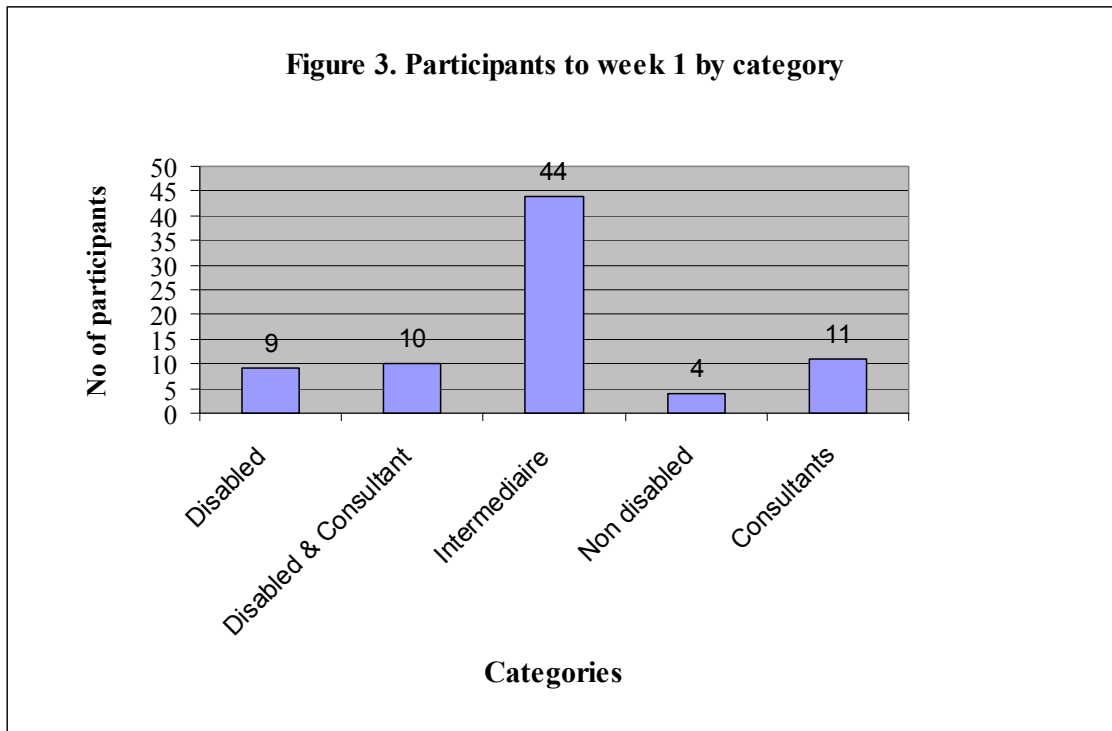
In the second group there are disabled people who also work as consultants in various types of organizations (e.g. public institutions, academic centres, supranational institutions, NGOs...) generally aimed at improving the social and professional live conditions of disabled people.

The third group includes non disabled people who have a strong interest in the issue either because of their job or because they have experienced some sort of disability in their family.

The fourth group is the most numerous one and include a wide variety of organizations of different nature (e.g. public, private, non-profit) that aim at bridging the gap between the supply and the demand sides of the labour market.

Finally, the fifth group is composed of people who – even though do not work as intermediaries – provide counselling to such organizations by working as, for instance, researchers in academic centres or on private basis.





In the following sections, the contributions of the participants have been analysed in terms of:

- problems and solutions;
- success stories.

The last section is where final suggestions and recommendations take place.

Section 2. Problems and Solutions

Major problems to the supply of labour by young disabled have been envisaged in the following areas:

- ✓ Society's perspective
- ✓ Education system
- ✓ Governmental policies
- ✓ Infrastructure

THE ISSUE OF SOCIETY'S PERSPECTIVE

Basman from South Africa says that *"..Society negative social stereotyping led to the historical and current discrimination of people with disabilities and their alienation from the*

*rest of the society. Disability discrimination can therefore be seen as a cross-racial and cross cultural problem affecting all societies, and one that no racial or cultural group can claim to have fully come to terms with” which seems to be a common perception in other countries as well. Jyoti (India) also says that “We disabled people see our problems as coming mainly from people's attitudes, the environment and social systems that actually keep us fairly oppressed. People are being educated in the thinking that we disabled people **must be receivers**; not that we must integrate them into our society and give them a job, **WHICH IS WHAT WE WANT**”.*

This happens to be the case in western countries as well as testified by Jennison (Canada) who had experienced unpleasant and uncooperative attitudes from her teachers while at the university.

It becomes clear that disability tends to be conceived as an isolated issue. Stigma and prejudice come from the part of the employers, schools, society as a whole, and often from the family itself. At this regard, Ayub Nabi Molla (Bangladesh) tells a story which is self explanatory “..before 1996 I was a project director of an international organization. I have lost my right hand by a road traffic accident. The Organization's authority considered me a invalid one and retrenched from my job without giving justified compensation. I had become unemployed... I became hopeless. One of my relative advised me to beg from train to train”.

As Deon (UK) says “perceptions held by "normal" people about the abilities, physical and mental, of disabled people is to a large extent pre-determined by beliefs inculcated in them during their formative years. Such beliefs arise in the cultural and religious environment they grow up in. This impacts directly on potential employment opportunities for disabled people but also impacts on disabled people's self image. Governments 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.”

Because of this misperception of disability, disabled youth tend to be seen as unable to bring any contribution to society. Employers tend to assume that a person with a disability would not be able to handle competitive employment and that the problems they would encounter by hiring disabled people would end up with higher costs for the company.

The solutions envisaged to overcome this problem may be diverse and relate to different levels. The most effective one would obviously be that of changing societal beliefs and misconceptions about disability. This can be done if each single component of the society (e.g. family, education system, employers, religion,..) does its own work towards a full recognition of the capacities of disabled youth beyond their disability. Again, this would not happen by magic but if and only if some of these components start what can be called a virtuous circle. Disabled youth are those who can promote that. Deon continues by saying “*It is up to professionals in, and members of, the disabled community globally to help achieve such a shift in attitude*”. The disabled youth would need to be empowered and to lobby for the respect of their rights in the society. It is really sad, Susanne says (Netherlands) “*to hear a deaf person behind you say to his friend that that poor blind girl with that black dog will never be able to go somewhere alone*”.

THE ISSUE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In addition to society’s perspective that lies in the realm of what can be defined the subjective vision of the issue moulded by the predominant value system in the society, there is another issue which is conversely rather objective, and that pertains to the lack of skills in disabled youth that objectively discriminates them from non-disabled people. This becomes even more important considering how much fast the technology is gaining importance in almost all types of job.

Penny (UK) addresses this issue when she talks about the emerging of new styles of employment “*Within the UK we see a move from manufacturing in some areas towards service provision. Often this new type of employment is very reliant on IT and new technology. There is a risk that such types of employment increasingly excludes disabled people when the capacity for adjustments to soft/hardware, employment procedures etc are not included at the design stage*”. Slightly different is the issue tackled by Eric (Australia) who says that “*University graduates with disabilities are more likely to begin their career*

search with a lack of relevant work skills and experience compared to their non-disabled peers because of a lack of access to pre-graduate employment. It may also be caused by the extra time some students with disabilities are required to spend in meeting the demands of their academic and social commitments, such as organising personal carers, finding and using accessible public transport, acquiring accessible study texts, finding and using accessible technology, etc”.

The lack of skills and experience turns us to the education system which is mainly responsible for that. As to education, the situation is rather diverse in the countries and can mainly be referred as to: (i) the lack of dedicated schools, and to (ii) the incapacity of the education system to implement programs specifically aimed at advising students as to their best fit opportunity first when enter and secondly when graduate from the college/university.

The first case is the easiest to comment upon and also the more difficult to address since it is all about devoting more resources to increase the number of facilities appropriately designed for disabled people or to adjust the current system for meeting the disabled people’ needs. Nevertheless, in countries where the scarcity of resources is the major issue, even the easiest solution becomes quite a challenge. The second case is more complex to address, even though it is that with more manageable solutions. First of all, let us defining what is meant by incapacity of the education system to implement programs specifically aimed at advising students as to their best fit opportunity first when enter and secondly when graduate from the college/university. This may refer to the lack of:

1. mentoring and university orientation programs.
2. supportive environment.
3. transition plans from learning to work, i.e., internship programs and career service.

“Mentoring is a simple concept not requiring work place modifications and is a great tool for demystifying disability and giving people who have a disability a potentially vital network opportunity that can lead to opportunities beyond the mentoring program” (Kevin, Australia). The same is true for the more general university orientation programs that apply in almost all universities and in some cases also colleges across the world. The question here is that of including and planning orientation programs that specifically take into consideration the condition of disability by advising disabled students as to the best fit options available in

the school. The feasibility of such programs is rather intuitive given that the marginal costs would not be relevant if not even null.

As to the second aspect, this has been clearly highlighted by Jennison (Canada) who says *“In the college and university setting, students with disabilities have told us about experiences with less than cooperative departments or professors who feel students with particular disabilities either should not, or can not successfully complete programs and courses. Comments such as "How can a blind person be an engineer", "You are Dyslexic, you can't teach," and "Deaf people can't be nurses", are a few that I remember off-hand students mentioning to us.... Some students unfortunately decide, for what ever reason that the added pressures brought on by this less than supportive environment are too much to handle. Some decide to change their field of study, while others simply drop out of school altogether. This most certainly will impact on these students as they consider entering the labor market. Some, for example, decide that they will not disclose their disabilities based on the challenging times they faced in school. Others end up believing what they have heard and choose not to pursue a particular career”*.

Teachers' attitude towards disability in some cases is not positive and tends to instil the idea that disabled people performance is poor (by definition) and that future employment may be given because of disability and not because disabled people meet the job requirements. This, again, belongs to what has been here called society's perspective and can be dealt with only at a societal level.

Finally, internship programs may prove to be among the most effective ways to empower youth disabled while looking for a job and again, it does not need to be set up specifically for disabled people but can be part of the current internship programs usually ran by colleges and universities. *“Recognizing that it is often difficult for people with disabilities to get that first job, one of the goals of the internship program is to sort of level the playing field by giving students actual work experience, something meaningful that they can put on their resumes”* (Meredith, USA).

THE ISSUE OF THE GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES

As to the governmental policies, it must be said that it mainly relates to the demand side and will therefore be discussed in the following sections. Nevertheless, some of the participants have pointed out some interesting elements that can support disabled youth while looking for

a job. Governmental policies mainly concern the wide spectrum of national regulations aimed at integrating the disabled people in the labor market. The “quota system”, fiscal incentives for private companies hiring disabled people, economic incentives for employers who decide to buy special appliances for disabled people (e.g. braille and hearing aids for blind and deaf people) are examples of governmental policies that try to attain a sufficient level of social protection. The supply side of this issue, which is undoubtedly related with the demand side, has been clarified by Helga (Netherlands) when she says that “*The disabled person should know about the procedures how to get the adaptations and subsidies and things like that, as you cannot expect the employer knows those things*”. Providing employers with clear and precise information on how to get special appliances and what the economic incentives currently are for buying them surely is invaluable information for the employer therefore helping the job-searching process.

THE ISSUE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The last major problem is in the infrastructural system (such as roads, transportation..) that, especially in developing countries, represents a very much big barrier for disabled people, impairing them to reach almost any place outside their home. Mary (Kenya) says for instance that “*infrastructure in Kenya is not meant to cater for disabled people. Our roads do not have special side lanes which disabled people can use and those who decide to brave their way to town have to battle it out with the cars. That could be really terrifying! Our public transport vehicles also are not tailored to meet the specific needs of disabled people. Most of our institutions are not built to cater for the needs of disabled youth and the challenge of trying to fit in is enormous e.g trying to access a building with no ramp with a wheelchair. Most of our lifts are meant for people who can see and hear thus a disabled person would need assistance otherwise they may not make it to their destination*”. Unfortunately this does not happen in developing countries only and is obviously at the base of any further discussion on how to empower the youth disabled.

Section 3. Success Stories

The following success stories have been selected because they give further insight as to the supply side by highlighting two successful key elements in getting a job: that of personal motivation and stubbornness. **Joshua** and **Suzanne** tell us their stories and it clearly

comes out how much their firm determination explained their success at work. Stubbornness can therefore be referred as the last item that participants at this week put forward. This is a critical factor enhancing the success rate of the job searching strategy. In a recent study by the Canadian Abilities Foundation (2004), it emerged that the attitudes of job seekers have an impact on the likelihood of their success at finding work. The same study also says that personal motivation can be even stronger than financial incentives in finding and keeping the job and that financial hiring incentives only offer a short-term benefit and once depleted, jobs disappear. Anthony C. Blount Jr. (USA) also says “*Financially mediated initiatives are frequently employed to stimulate change, and while this method may prove effective in stimulating immediate employment of disabled youth, from experience it may not prove functional in mediating long-term changes in employment of disabled youth. Consequently, I think that novel educational methods may serve to mediate long-term changes in employment of disabled youth, while financial-mediated initiatives may serve to promote immediate changes*”. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that stubbornness and self-confidence are often the product of the society’s attitude towards disability, the education system and family support.

**Joshua R. Beal
(USA)**

I am currently working at The World Bank in Washington D.C. as a disability research assistant where I help oversee the Eastern Central Asia (ECA) loan portfolio for disability components. I recently graduated from the University of Hawaii in December of 2003 with a BA in Economics. Shortly thereafter I moved to Washington DC and found my current position after only 2 job interviews. I am deaf.

I must state that before I moved here to Washington DC, I had a fair amount of success in Hawaii obtaining and maintaining employment. I also was a self-made model and actor while working a night job in the restaurant industry and going to the University during the day.

Beginning with demand, I must say that any type of employment is relatively dependent on the economic demands of the region. In Hawaii, the economy is mainly dependent on tourism, my first job in Hawaii was working in a restaurant. This job was fairly accessible to me because I have mobility, good communication skills, and most importantly, experience. I acquired experience working in the restaurant industry when I was still in high school. I began working at a small hotel during the summers and began working full-time at two restaurants before I moved out to Hawaii. Prior to this, I was **encouraged by my parents** to follow my entrepreneurial instincts. I began working when I was 8 years old by washing cars and mowing lawns for my neighbours. After doing that for several years, I began carrying a paper route, delivering newspapers every morning before I went to school.

I used this income to purchase small luxuries such as skateboards, bicycles, and later I bought my first car at the age of 17. This habit of working on my own gave me the confidence to approach other people and offer my services in exchange for payment. Also, I had the luxury of watching my father and

my father's family, all entrepreneurs, own their own businesses. This gave me the impression from an early age of what was needed to become successful working on my own. For this reason, I believe the environment around us is very important in promoting how to work independently.

With experience and references, I was able to obtain a new position when I moved to Hawaii in 1994. This does not mean that the position came easily. I had to make a resume, print it up without a computer, and without the help of others. I also had to seek out jobs that would be fitting for my skills. I also found that newspaper ads are usually the last resort for any job-hunter. I believe that it is best to rely on personal contacts or focus on jobs that are in your immediate area as to minimize competition with other job-seekers.

Suzanne M. van den Bercken (Netherlands)

I was still in Kindergadden (4 to 5 years old) as I started to bring letters to the mail box, empty glass bottles to the glass container, bringing the garbage from the garage to the sidewalk on Tuesday morning. Some years later I walked dogs for neighbours, washed cars, did little shopping (like buying eggs at the farm for elderly). I also always have been participating in activities outdoors and indoors with fully sighted people. I did not go to scouting for the blind, but to the normal scouting next doors. I did not go to the Sunday school class for disabled children but to the normal class.

I started my first job on contract base when I was 14 as moderator of 3 areas on a bulletin board system. After one year my employer decided to sell the bulletin board to another company, including all employees. This new company kept me for half a year and then tried to dismiss me because they were going to convert the BBS into a website and I (still working with MS Dos that time and legally blind) could not browse the internet and therefore would not be valuable for the for them any longer. With the help of our information technology teacher at high school and one of my dearest colleagues I managed to find software to browse the Internet with MS Dos. The reason the company gave me to fire me was no longer valid and so they took me for another 6 months. I have had many accessibility problems with that website and although they were willing to solve the problems, I had to explain things to them and come up with solutions. It has been a tough time in which I often felt left alone, but now I can say I have become an experienced web accessibility advisor.

I have had many times like this, in which it looked like I would lose my job but I always found a way to keep the job. **It all depends on willpower and creativity.** I found software that solved my problems. I convinced people by keeping talking and discussing and demonstrating my abilities to them.

Section 4. Final recommendations

The following are the major issues discussed in the first week as to the Supply Side, that disabled youth looking for a job:

1. Stigma and prejudice from the part of employers and society at large do have an impact on the process of looking for a job. Disabled youth should be active in reversing the vicious circle

2. Lack of skills and experience discriminates disabled youth. Transitions plans from learning to work can be very much effective in that respect and potentially at very low costs for the education system.
3. Disabled people's attitude is key in looking for and keeping a job. Self-confidence, self-esteem and stubbornness can change employers' perception and put forward disabled's abilities rather than disability.

Week 2: Demand Side

Section 1. Introduction

The second week was all about the demand side: the role of employers in the employment of young disabled people. Rhiannon Suter - from the Employers' Forum on Disability - moderated the week.

Similarly at what done for the first week, Rhiannon asked participants to discuss the following specific aspects:

1. Problems & solutions (i.e. what barriers are caused by the attitudes and actions of employers and how can these be removed? What barriers do employers face when employing young people with disabilities? Are the issues the same in developed and developing countries? What types of initiatives/ programmes can be used to overcome these barriers? What can employers do to help alleviate the barriers which face disabled youth identified in the first week's discussion?).
2. Success stories (i.e. What different models are being used to engage with and mobilise the power of employers on this issue? When disabled individuals have been successful in finding work what role has the employer played?).
3. Lessons learned (What are the key lessons learned which employers and others need to take on board if more young disabled people are to get jobs? What tips do employers have for young disabled job-seekers?).

Messages were 162 coming from 52 participants. In figures 4 and 5 they have been grouped by geographic area and categories.

Figure 4. Participants at week 2 by geographic area

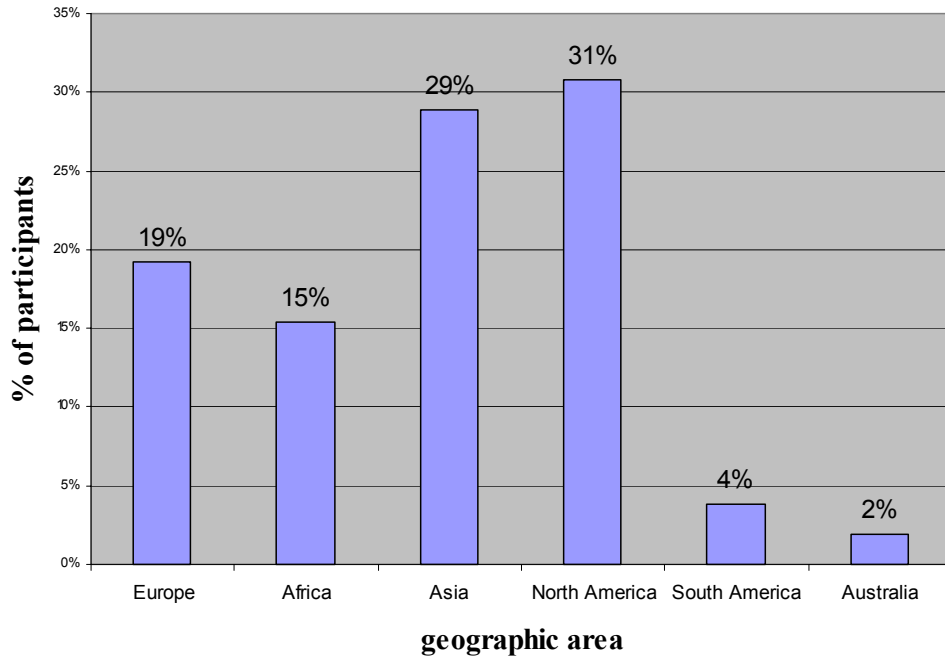
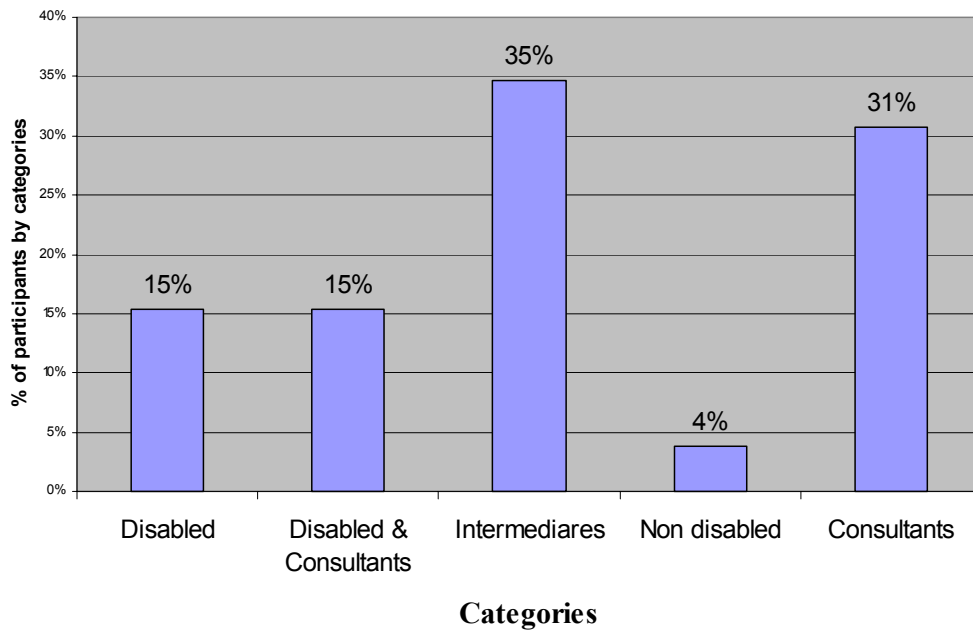


Figure 5. Participants at week 2 by category



The major findings of the second week are presented in the next sections and concern the following themes, as spelt out from Rhiannon in his final summary:

1. Communication of the business case
2. Role of intermediaries
3. Accommodation
4. Legal issues and quotas.

Success stories and final recommendations are the last two sections.

Section 2. The issue of communication of the business case

The discussion was actually around communication of what disability actually is and the confusion which can be caused by the disability symbol of wheelchair, when in fact only a small proportion of disabled people use a wheelchair (5 – 8%). This takes us to a more general problem i.e. that in the general public disability is often equated with severe handicaps that require substantial aids (e.g. wheelchair) and workplace adjustments. Severe disabilities, however, affect only about one third of the working-age disabled people. Many disabilities have arisen while at work and come from cardiovascular diseases as well as mental and psychological problems (OECD, 2003^[30]). Employers often recognise they are not fully aware of what disability may mean and while there are some who do not even show any interest in improving the knowledge at that regard, there are others who are genuinely willing to understand for purpose of hiring disabled workers.

Section 3. The issue of the role of intermediaries

It is well known that the employment rate of people with disabilities is low, in some countries very low. This can be seen as a failure of government social policies but also as inefficiencies of the market to make the supply meeting the demand and vice versa. The work done in Canada showed that many conventional job search tools and techniques do not work for disabled people. The same often happens with employers who – even though willing to hire disabled people – do not know how to reach them. Intermediaries therefore play a crucial role in helping disabled people and employers communicate and in training/ matching disabled people's skills to jobs. This clearly emerged from the second week discussion. However they are not always the solution to the problem. As Rhiannon says “*The competency of these intermediaries is key: too often they lack the understanding and skills to actually make a*

difference. Disabled people themselves as well as employers must be actively involved in designing programmes and initiatives which are effective. Effective intermediaries are those which serve the needs of both disabled people and employers – experience shows that services which work for business, usually work for disabled people too". The analysis of the role of intermediaries can however be found further on in this report since it has been the main topic of the third week of the e-discussion.

Section 4. The issue of accommodation

By and large, the majority of disabled workers need some sort of accommodation at the workplace in order to perform the job. There was discussion around this issue and, more specifically concerning the (i) employers' perspective that it is a costly measure, (ii) unawareness of existing government's incentives/assistance at this regard and, the active role that disabled people and intermediaries should adopt to help employers make useful adjustments. From available data (Canadian Abilities Foundation, 2004), it emerges that annual workplace accommodation costs are under USD 1,500.00 which can be considered a reasonable amount especially considering that in the majority of the countries there is some form of assistance from the governments to pay for (or co-pay) the workplace adjustments. It can obviously not be the case in those low-income countries where there are no governments' aids. From the discussion comes out that there is a general agreement with the importance of accommodation but that you can't expect employers to be experts. Here the third aspect of this issue. Disabled people and intermediaries should work with employers to help them make useful adjustments and find what the current government's assistance program is. Pranav (India) says "*When I started working 2 years ago my employer's web site and other internal IT systems were not accessible. This was hindering me effectively doing my work. I met with the in house development team and now have got most of the systems to be fully accessible. Of course, there were a lot of factors that facilitated this chief among them being my employer's ability to be open minded and the developers' willingness to listen.*" Also Penny (UK) says "*While many employers may be aware of their legal duties, they may not be aware of the assistance that is available to them... here in the UK we have a Government funded scheme that helps pay most of the costs of adjustments or accommodations - but this is little understood. Employers tend to equate disability with extra expense but, in fact, most adjustments or accommodations can be achieved at little or no cost. Simply re-thinking how a*

job can be done or re-allocating tasks amongst the work force can be hugely effective”.

Section 5. The legal issue and quota

As stated in the background to this report, quota systems are an example of measures that have been taken by several countries to cope with the problem of unemployment of people with disability. Such systems call for employers to employ a minimum percentage of disabled workers and ultimately aim promoting employment opportunities in the mainstream. They have long been implemented by many Western countries and recently introduced in several Asia Pacific and African countries. The quota system is also the most criticised government policy since it does not seem to have attained its goals in almost any of the countries where it is applied. During the e-discussion a fair amount of discussion arose around this issue and while there was someone who advocated the quota system, there were others who accused the system to be entirely ineffective.

Mary (Kenya) says *“I think your country is way ahead of Kenya where there are no quotas or any sort of positive discrimination to enable disabled people make their way to institutions of higher learning, government jobs or medical care in government hospitals. I agree with you that the quota of 1% is a good place to start. Meanwhile, i can only hope and wait for the day there will be any sort of positive discrimination for people with disabilities in Kenya”.*

A different perception is that of Nafees (Bangladesh) who clearly indicates all the major problems with the quota system *“In Bangladesh, over the last few decades there has been a 10% employment quota reserved for orphans and persons with disabilities – in all public sector jobs. However, this quota had a number of problems. Firstly, the quota did not apply in the case of first and second class jobs in the government machinery and so only other lower quality jobs were on offer. This probably was an indication that the employers would think that people with disabilities were not ‘adequately fit’ for higher-ranking positions. Secondly, there was no demarcation of how much of this quota was further allocated for orphans and persons with disabilities. So an employer could take up all orphans and fill up the quota.....Fourthly, this quota was declared simply as an administrative order, without any strong legal backing. So no employer was bound to follow this, and nobody could be challenged for not abiding by the order. Finally, while the quota was there,... the Ministry of*

Establishment, ..., had set forth a number of criteria, which also include health related indicators, and so persons with disabilities are barred from the recruitment on health related grounds. For example, since they do not have an eye-sight measuring 6/6 (or 20/20) a persons with visual impairment would be barred from government employment..... More recently, in a public meeting, the Prime Minister has declared a fresh 1% quota, this time specifically for persons with disabilities, in all cadre service jobs in the country. We are hopeful that, with this new quota being enforced, and with the legislation being amended, soon the employment market in Bangladesh could open new horizons for persons with disabilities”.

A similar issue that raised some discussion was that of wage subsidies. There are countries where the wage of the disabled people is shared between the employer and the government at least in the short run. Again, it has been said that this measure is rather ineffective because since in the long run employers tend to leave disabled employees. However there also are positive effects as outlined by Nayinda (Norway) *“Wage subsidies might have a negative side but they also have certain advantages. At least, the short-term employment provides the individual with a disability with work experience which as you know, is often the requirement for applying for jobs on the open job-market. Secondly it provides exposure to the PWD while it also creates opportunities for the employer and other employees at the workplace to interact with a disabled person and maybe, acquire positive experiences from that”.*

The problem with quotas and social protection policies more in general, is that even though they generally aim at introducing disabled people in the mainstream, often do that by instilling the perception that disabled employees have had jobs because of their disability and not because they can effectively contribute to the production process. Nonetheless, some form of legal protection is necessary to promote employment among disabled people, especially if young. As suggested by Rhiannon, discrimination legislation, which protects the right of disabled people to compete on a level playing field so that they can demonstrate their skills, is likely to be more effective and can be thought as a valid alternative.

Section 6. Success stories

Success stories have emerged during the week. Nevertheless they mainly pertained to either what has been discussed in the first week, that is individuals who were successful in finding a job by demonstrating to employers their capabilities in performing the job (concentrating on their abilities rather than their disability), or to the role of intermediaries, that is programmes and organisations whose mission is that of bringing disabled people and employers together which is the focus of the following week.

Section 7. Final recommendations

The major issues discussed in this second week are:

1. Employers often do not know what disability mean and tend to consider it as a costly issue to tackle.
2. The Intermediaries should work for the needs of both disabled people and employers but often lack the understanding and skills to make the difference.
3. The majority of disabled people need some sort of accommodation to perform their job. Employers perceive it is a costly measure and seldom are aware there are national schemes aimed at alleviating/sharing the costs. Disabled people can help employers by informing hem on the current governments' assistance programs.
4. Quota systems and social protection policies are important to guarantee some form of integration of disabled people in the mainstream but may prove to be ineffective if the implementation is not followed-up and perverse if the ratio is that disabled people must have a job because of their disability and not for their merits. Social protection schemes should conversely aim at protecting disabled people's rights by putting forward their skills.

Week 3: the role of Intermediaries

Section 1. Introduction

The third week of the discussion was on “Other actors” but actually focused on the role of Intermediaries and Society organizations in working with disabled people to providing necessary supports to enable job training, job creation, placement and retention services for employment.

Intermediaries and society organizations may include advocates, counselors, teachers, relatives, friends, mentors, caregivers, social service agencies, community-based organizations, and schools.

In most areas of the world, the political and socio-economic environment influences the availability of employment for youth with disabilities. It is also important to recognize local community collaboration which increases organizational and individual capacity. Designing services which include collaborative linkages with community partners is one way to meet the challenge of service model implementation, while at the same time improves service delivery for the larger community.

The discussion was structured around the following broad areas:

1. Problems and Solutions;
2. Success Stories (what works and how we can use success stories as a model to share with others);
3. Lessons learned (suggestions for others, including youth with disabilities, employers, intermediaries, and policy makers).

Eighty-six messages came from different regions of the world and 36 participants contributed to the discussion. In figures 6 and 7 participants have been grouped by geographic area and category. As to category, they have been grouped differently from the previous two weeks since the five categories used in those cases were not applicable to the third week.

Figure 6. Participants at week 3 by geographic area

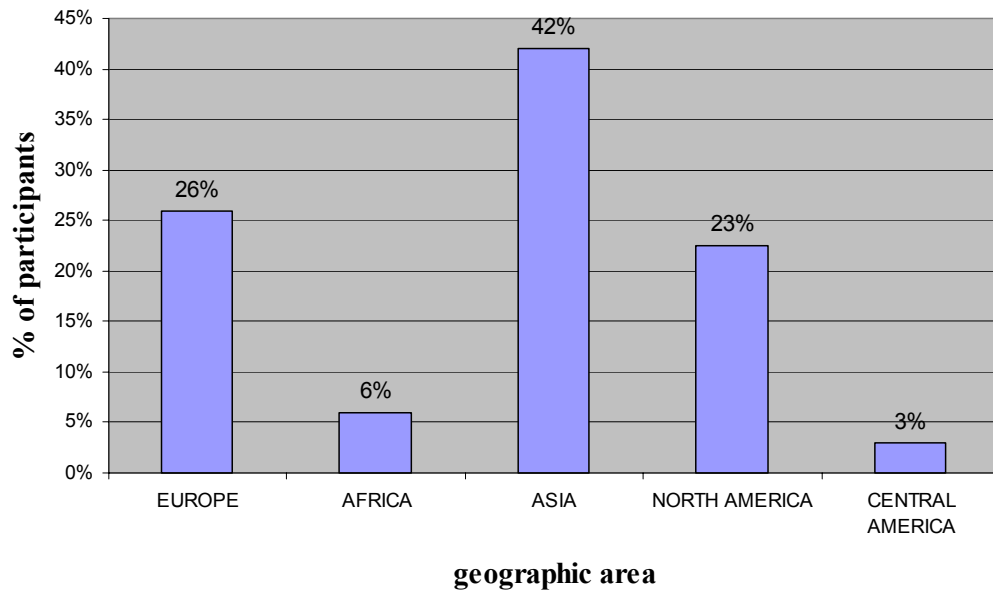
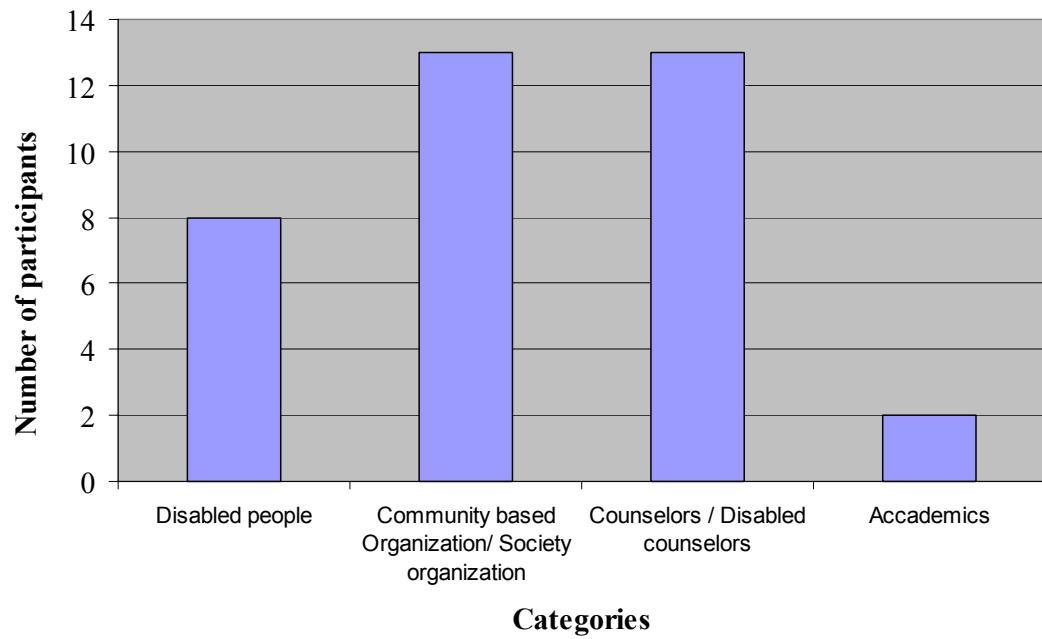


Figure 7. Participants to week 3 by category



In the following sections, the contributions of the participants have been analyzed in terms of:

- Problems and solutions
- Success stories

Final recommendations conclude the analysis of the third week.

Section 2. Problems and Solutions

Problems and solutions related to the role of Intermediaries in the employment of youth with disability were analyzed from different perspectives:

- 1) Society;
- 2) Education and training;
- 3) Government.

THE SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE

The participants envisaged that the Intermediaries have to play a role in providing the necessary support to PWD, taking into consideration several key points:

- 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
- Individual 'PWD' centred approach is critical for employment.

There was some discussion around the first point that is disability must not be considered isolated from other social issues and must therefore be fully integrated in policy measures by policy makers, planners, professionals and educators.

Participants also highlighted that disability is not an individual but a community issue, as Glenda states *“I think what is needed is more than simply "enhancing employability" of youth with disabilities. Over the years, as a person with a disability, I have noticed that the focus has been on the person with the disability. It as if we could "fix" the person by providing more training, more skills, more accommodations, more on-the-job supports, then suddenly employers will be lining up to hire these people with disabilities. Now, please do not misunderstand me -- I am not saying these factors are not necessary. They definitely are, and in some or many cases that may be enough to find them employment. But, stepping back and*

looking at the larger picture, so much more is needed than simply focus on the youth who happens to have the disability.”

Glenda also drew attention to the three “AAA Principles”: Awareness, Attitudes and Acceptance. This means that people with disability need *“to be motivated to get an education and then to seek employment, they need to see what is possible, to have hope, to dream, to see they do have a future if they strive for it “.*

From the discussion, another important point emerged addressing the fact that PWD are more able to find solutions to their challenges and must have direct control over resources made available for these purposes. Sebastian Ferrer and Philip Day from Sweden write: *“We have the feeling that, despite of the quality and good intentions of programs involving intermediaries promoting employment, and training for youth with disabilities, these programs might not have the desired effect. We suspect that funding non-disabled intermediaries who attempt to help PWDs become more employable does more good for the intermediaries than it does for the PWDs and may do little to change the negative view of PWDs held by society. Ideally funding should go directly to PWD or organizations of PWD”.*

Mary Kemunto (Kenya) reinforces by saying *“Your suggestion that people with disabilities be funded directly for their program caught my attention for two reasons: First I think that only people with disabilities know what their most serious problems as well as their most urgent needs. When people without disabilities are charged with the task of coming up with programs for PWD, they can only imagine what is needed and sometimes their imagination could be wrong..... I therefore agree with you both and suggest that PWD should be empowered and given the challenge of taking charge of their affairs and if they so wish, they can work in partnership with people without disabilities. That would definitely be more effective. Secondly, I think that programs would be more attractive to PWD if they are organized by other PWDs. I think they (PWD) are more likely to give their whole hearted co-operation to such programs. That is not to say however that people without disabilities should not take charge where there is need as they prepare a PWD to take over”.*

What does funding directly disabled youth mean? Sebastian and Philip say: *“Promote the organizations of customers (i.e. youth with disabilities) at national and international levels, and support them financially and in other ways in order to empower them and lift the status of PWD. The support to organizations of PWD is especially important*

in Developing Countries where these organizations are often non-existent or very weak. Promote the creation/development of good, effective and compulsory legislation against discrimination in every country. Support the work of the UN Convention on rights for PWD. We feel that workplace adjustments should be publicly funded and that efforts should be made to inform PWD about such funding and how to get it. Simple clear procedures are required along with simple clear definitions of who qualifies. Discrimination must be banned and employers have the responsibility of making workplaces accessible. Develop, in collaboration with organizations of youth with disabilities, accessible, easy to get information about the different programs and how to participate in them. The organizations of PWD should administrate or participate in the administration of the programs.”

The solutions envisaged here can - on one hand - increase the well-being, self-esteem and income of PWD and - on the other hand - raise public awareness on disability issues, gradually changing the attitude of society towards disabled people.

Paul Newman (UK) replies: *“I agree with much you say about an individual 'PWD' centred approach to employment”* and Schachter (USA) argues that *“Despite the huge number of intermediaries in the U.S., the majority of PWD's, both youth and adults, remain unemployed. The idea of releasing funding directly to the individual is interesting. The Ticket-to-Work initiative directed by the Social Security Administration, is basically an initiative to give vouchers (cash equivalents) to people with disabilities who receive Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income (SSDI, SSI) so that they can purchase the training and employment services that they want from an approved list of vendors.....It does conform, somewhat, to what you have proposed, since an approved vendor could certainly be an organization or individual with a disability who provides a training and/or employment service.”* Jimmy Weber explains the Ticket to Work initiative *“A PWD "assigns" their Ticket to an approved "Employment Network" who will then provide services they need to help them become employed. Ticket holders can assign their tickets where they want to. Employment Networks will not necessarily always accept every ticket--if the person needs service in areas that they do not provide services. When the Ticket is assigned, the Employment Network and the Ticket holder work out a plan for employment and the Employment Network will provide or purchase the services that are needed. All of this is done at no cost to the Ticket holder who assigned his/her Ticket. There is no money given/reimbursed to the Employment Network until the person has become employed and is earning more than "Substantial Gainful*

Activity." (currently with SSDI SGA is \$810 a month). The money that is then given to the Employment Network is not a payment for services but is a "reward" for a job well done in helping this person with a disability work...".

Therefore, if PWD can have and manage resources, they will better determine solutions to their challenges.

A useful remark was made by Penny Melville-Brown about people who acquire a disability during their working lives. She states that *"They may have good work experience and many of the transferable skills that employers want but may need to change their career direction due to the disability."* Vickie Schachter also comments upon this issue by saying *"In the U.S., there is an industry built upon helping people with disabilities obtain and retain employment. Basically, there are only three variations on that theme: supported employment, competitive employment (which largely means working for someone else, not self-employment) and sheltered employment. It seems to me that there ought to be some additional options available to people with disabilities, particularly youth. And people should be able to move from one option to another, in no particular sequence, based upon their personal needs, occupational skills and desires."*

The Intermediaries, working in this field, have to look at PWD in a broad sense, designing services which include collaborative linkages with the community. This is a way to meet the challenge of service model implementation, while at the same time improving service delivery for the larger community. Kavita Krishnaswamy (India) says *"Friends, we are all here today because we have achieved something great. We have realized that we have the power to change society. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence. With ambition, we will make a world of difference by declaring that disability is not an inability!!!"*. Kavita has founded a group for students with disabilities at her University.

EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PERSPECTIVE

Many participants underlined the importance and the essentiality of education for PWD. Some details and innovations were discussed.

The main points included:

- New work skills for acquired disability during working life
- Educational empowerment of children in pastoral nomadic communities
- Rehabilitation of disabled adolescents with a history of imprisonment

- Teaching all children about disability
- Integration of PWD into all levels of education
- Providing technology and training to PWD

Penny states that: *“many people acquire a disability during their working lives. They may have good work experience and many of the transferable skills that employers want but may need to change their career direction due to the disability. Consequently they may need retraining to gain new work skills - and there is still a range of problems in ensuring that the providers of such training can meet the needs of disabled people. So they may not be able to make that change because the system is not geared up to make the adjustments”*.

Some participants introduced into the discussion specific elements that should be given particular attention when the role of Intermediaries is at issue.

The situation of disabled youth in nomadic communities - for instance - often results in rural-urban migration, absence of advocates, and employment discrimination. The recommended solutions would be intensive focus on childhood education (educational empowerment) and efforts to change negative attitudes of the society towards the disabled youth.

Some other participants explored the link between disability and crime - particularly learning disabilities and mental health issues. Young people with criminal convictions and possibly a history of imprisonment find employment even more difficult to achieve. State-Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies in the U.S., such as VESID in New York State and the Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation (C-Far) in the U.K. are working in this area.

Integrating PWD education at all levels means that no prejudice, no obstacle, can limit the possibility of expressing their attitudes, we have to look at the whole person rather than her/his disability. Margaret Peat in her e-mail to Glenda states *“As head of St Loye's College, a residential training college for people with disabilities, I was aware that in many instances the disability was the factor which opened up opportunities for our students for a better life. Don't misunderstand me - people with disabilities have many hurdles to overcome before they get to a place like St Loye's - but we found that the other 'baggage' like frequent 'knocks' in confidence, poverty and isolation were by far the greater problems. Once staff had started to help the student build their self esteem, we could work on matching their employment aim with the vocational training and the support needed to make them employable, including*

literacy and numeracy support. Working with students and employers in this way, looking at the whole person rather than just their disability - addressing the 3 'A's as Glenda would say (Awareness, Attitudes and Acceptance) - was very successful in achieving sustained employment”

GOVERNMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

In most area of the world, the political and socio-economic environment influences the availability of employment for youth with disability. The following key words describe some characteristics that policy initiatives towards PWD should have:

- Coherence
- Flexibility
- Attention

Governments have to recognize that the biggest issue affecting people with disability is the ever increasing number out of work. Employment programs to support people in work and their employers are playing a vital role in addressing these issues.

The workforce development systems in most countries require a more integrated approach to move youth with disabilities into jobs that bring them dignity and take them out of poverty. It has already been said that job training, apprenticeships and internships are a good source of training youth with disabilities. The benefits of these arrangements permit the employer to learn about the productivity and efficiency of persons with disabilities as employees, and permit employees to acquire real work experience, habits and skills.

The attention of Government to facilitate the role of the intermediaries in helping PWD, includes:

- Prioritizing the childhood education (educational empowerment),
- Adapting the workplace (accessibility)
- Allowing flexible hiring rules (The Office of Personnel Management plans to introduce a pair of reforms designed to give federal agencies more hiring flexibility),
- The establishment of flexible working hours (in the EU there are policies to making labour markets more flexible, i.e. part time jobs; the promotion of teleworking).
- Facilitating new initiatives (mentoring day, microfinancing, and Forums on disability).

Section 3. Success Stories

Nafees (Bangladesh)

“In Bangladesh, we have had some very successful models of Microfinance - namely the BRAC and the Grameen Bank models - which have earned name and fame across the globe. We have over 25,000 NGOs working in Bangladesh, and if you ask what is the most common program they are running, it should be microfinance. There should be over 150 organizations working on Disability who are also running MF programs, who have mainstreamed people with disabilities in their existing programs quite successfully. Yes they also have to contribute with deposits before accessing the loans, but this deposits come in small instalments, usually at a weekly basis, and amounts from BD Taka 5-25 (USD1 = BDT60), depending on the NGO and its size of loans. The people with disabilities are part of a group (of about 20-25 people) and often family members are also included into the groups. People can generally expect to get a loan once they have been saving for about 15-20 weeks (this also depends on the NGOs). So you see the deposits are not too burdensome”.

Howard Wallack

“Hi - I'm Howard Wallack, Director of Goodwill Global, the strategic business unit of Goodwill Industries International, Inc. responsible for new business development outside the U.S. and Canada. In my career I've had experience with programs in more than 65 countries, both industrialized and those in various stages of economic growth and transition, and am heartened by the depth of experiences from such a vast community participating in this e-discussion.....

I'd like to provide two specific examples of a collaborative linkage that has taken such an integrated approach. In Panama, our associate member Asociación Panameña de Industrias de Buena Voluntad (Goodwill Panama), has an effective "Alliance with Business and Industry". This is a formal, negotiated memorandum of understanding (MOU) whereby Goodwill Panama commits itself to training persons with disabilities for the production and service needs of the Chamber's member businesses, and the Chamber commits itself to promoting continuously employment of persons with disabilities with its member businesses. The effort has numerous benefits: dependability of the employees, increased productivity and growth in revenues..... Additionally, in Ecuador, another Goodwill associate member, the Fundación Nueva Vida has had notable success is the Manos Unidas project (United Hands), in which persons with disabilities operate a candy cart with merchandise to sell, form a micro-enterprise and, through a three-way agreement between the Foundation, the municipal city government, and CONADIS (National Council on Disabilities), receive the necessary business permits to operate. The program has directly benefited 250 persons with disabilities in 4 cities, and indirectly benefited 750 family members. Thirty percent of the beneficiaries have expanded their businesses (moving initially from a mobile cart to fixed kiosk operation), and an association of confectioners with disabilities has been formed. It's an example of how microenterprises for/by persons with disabilities can be promoted and created, with appropriate institutional links that eliminate or minimize barriers for market entry, can be sustained”

Paul Newman

“Tripod is project that Susan Scott Parker of the Employers' Forum on Disability and I are working on advising officials of the Department of Work and Pensions concerning how employers can be engaged to recruit and retain employees with disabilities. As you know the Forum has approaching 400 employer members who employ over 20% of the UK working population and has a lot of experience in advising employers on how to make it easier for them.

We have adopted a structure for looking at employer engagement based upon work that has been done for us by Work Structuring Ltd. There is nothing particularly sophisticated or new about the approach. We believe that success occurs when the three parties to any recruitment or retention process are working effectively together. The three parties are employers, disabled job seekers and intermediary (brokering) organisations. They all need to be committed (engaged), prepared (equipped) and actually doing something (delivering). We call it Tripod because of the three legs. At each stage of the process, we know there are potential obstacles to successful outcomes and we're interested in building our knowledge of those”.

Section 4. Final recommendations

Several recommendations emerged from the e-discussion around the role of the Intermediaries. They are listed below.

1. Designing services that include collaborative linkages with community.
2. Develop models on which to build collaboration on an international level between employers, intermediaries and PWD (Forum).
3. Intermediary organisations need to be more actively involved in promoting demand for employment.
4. PWD as main actors (devising solutions for their challenges and maintaining control over resources).
5. Education empowerment, especially in rural areas.
6. Technology as a means to improve skills.
7. Success stories as encouragement for youth with disability.

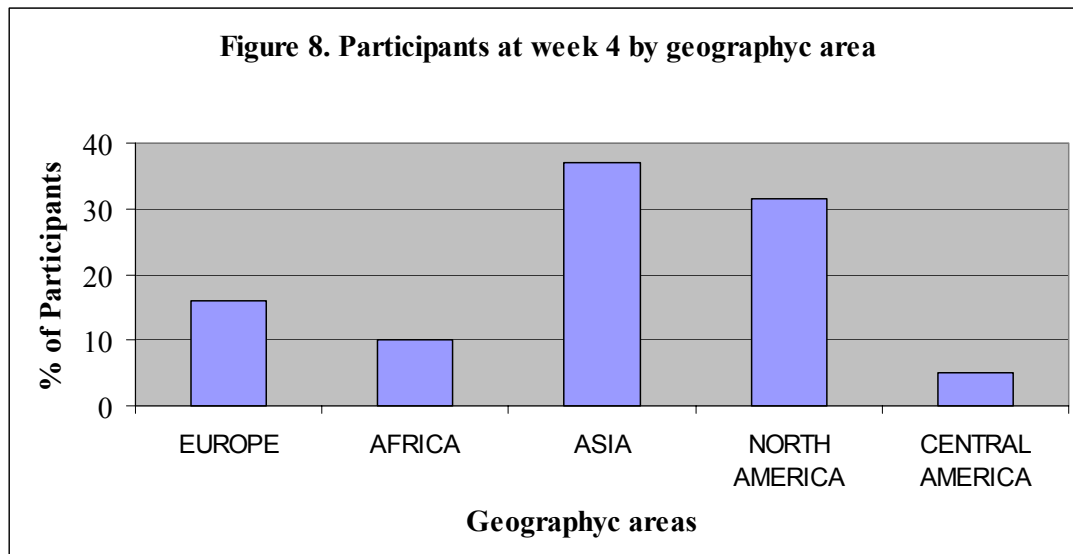
Week 4: Policy makers and Governments perspectives

Section 1. Introduction

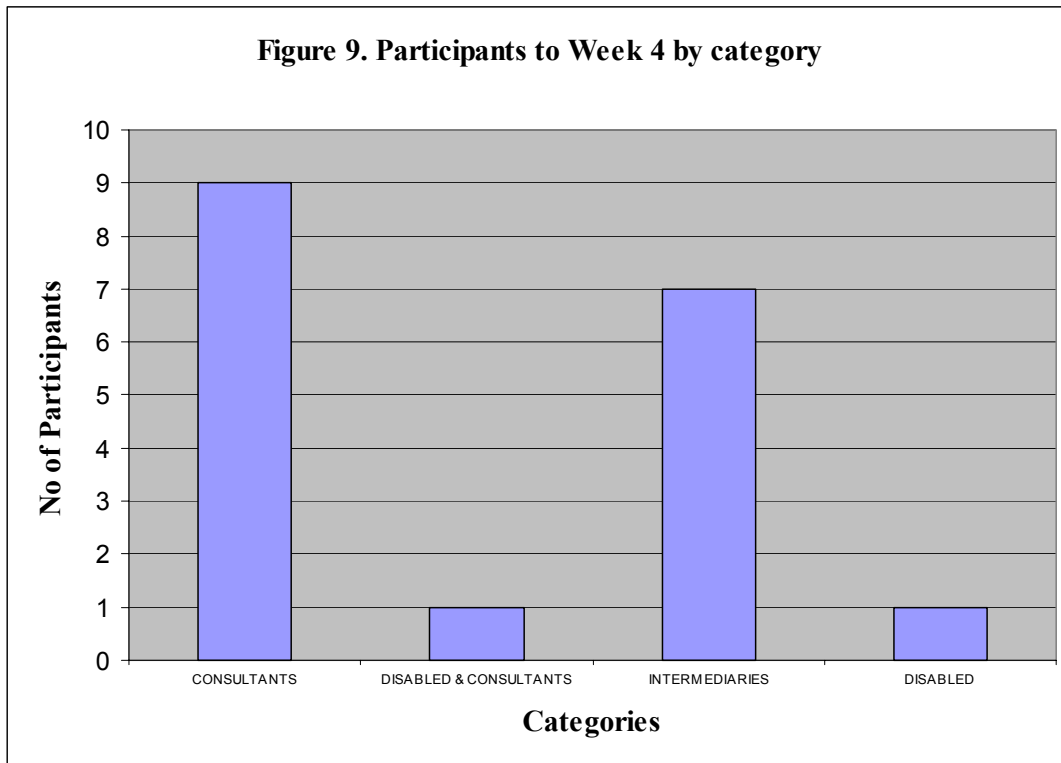
The four week of discussion was centered on the perspectives of policy makers and national and local Governments as it related to transition planning for youth with disabilities for all aspects of adult living and earning.

Thomas Golden from Cornell University, the moderator of this week, structured the discussion through five leading questions to better explore the role of policy makers and government in effecting transition.

Forty messages came from different regions of the world and 18 participants contributed to the discussion (figures 8 and 9).



The participants have been grouped into four classes according to their job or to how they introduced themselves.



The participants discussed on:

- 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

The contribution of the participants have been analyzed by following these key points.

Section 2. Analysis

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,*

much less to do anything about it. 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.“

In Switzerland, Simone Berchtold, stated that they have just begun to put in place laws against the discrimination of people with disabilities. Simone writes that *“we only begun to talk about anti discrimination law around 1995 and then Marc Sutter member of the Parliament launched an initiative which wanted the right for disabled people not to be discriminated against in the Swiss constitution but it was refused by the Swiss voters on May 18 2003 and so the law and accompanying texts came in to force on January 1st 2004”*. The law states that nobody can be discriminated against because of race, handicap, and religion and so on. In the new law it is overall the public institutions that are to adapt to the need of people with disabilities in domains such as public transport, building, services schools, education and professional life. On the three last domains the law is rather vague but they are hoping in Switzerland that this state is going to improve. The law does not specifically address the question of transition between school and work life but it says that all the governmental offices and departments must be accessible so that people with disabilities can work and that they have equal access to work. Simone Berchtold concluded his first message by writing *”I often think that things for PWD would change if a PWD would be president or minister of a country.”*

Duncan Blackman from Canada states that *”since last fall, I’ve 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. From my discussions with 8 provinces, there were some who had developed transition-planning strategies”*.

A summary of these practices follows:

1. Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Developmental Services Branch (MCSS). To support transition from school to community life, MCSS created the Foundations program. The goal of this program is for each participant to have the

knowledge and skills necessary to make a successful transition from school to community-based activities, community living and work opportunities. The key elements of this unique initiative are the emphasis on individualized approaches, community partnerships and an active role for parents in the design and delivery of the supports. Over the past four years, \$15 million has been invested to serve over 1,750 people. There are a number of initiatives aimed at building or expanding community capacity which is being coordinated with business organizations and the community colleges. A number of these projects are structured to enable the individual to move into employment situations. Families are involved in the design and monitoring of some of these programs.

2. Newfoundland Department of Health & Community Services - Policy & Program Services Branch. The Model for Co-ordination of Services to Children and Youth with Special Needs includes a planning mechanism, the Individual Support Service Plan, which would include a determination of what is needed to facilitate the transition to adult services.
3. British Columbia is in a state of flux with a planned move of their services to a community-based and governed organization. However, current Ministry (Adult Community Living Services Policy Branch, Ministry for Children and Family Development) documentation places the onus on families to initiate the transition planning. Families should generally start planning for their child's transition to adulthood by the time he/she is 16 years old. A transition plan team and a transition plan should be developed to address potential adult needs and the skills the child needs to learn during the high school years. The transition from services for children and youth to adult services ideally involves the child, family, service providers, school professionals and ministry staff in the planning process, as services may be provided through a number of ministries.

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."*

In Kosovo we learned from Hiljmnijeta Apuk 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 Okiama from Kenya shared that they launched the Kenyan decade for people with disabilities and plan of action this April. Her opinion is *“It was a little late I would say since the African decade of people with disabilities was launched way back in 1998. Other than this April's plan of action, I would say 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....We hope that the decade will sensitise all our policy makers to the needs of Kenyans with disabilities and be reflected in the policies and development plans. Only time will tell whether what has been laid down in the plan of action will become reality in the lives of Kenyans with disabilities. The launch was led by our Minister for sports and Gender but bearing in mind the fact that there is no department in his ministry for people with disabilities; we can only hope that a department is established soon and that more growth and development will follow. Transition planning is not prescribed for in our laws and we hope that it will be provided for as implementation of the Plan of action for the Kenyan Decade of People with disabilities gets underway. It is not provided for under other pieces of legislation either and consequently, post school adult tracking has not been developed as yet. Since the plan of action is only a few weeks old, I guess the issue of policy makers success can only be answered at a later stage in the development of our disability laws”*.

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.

In Belize, a small country in the heart of Central America with a population of about 275,000, the size of the country and economy seems to pose a barrier for Government to place any priority on the services to persons with disabilities. However, Peter says “*as you have suggested, I would appreciate receiving any sample legislation that I can look at and possibly get other parents or interested parties to make submissions to the legislature to get them adapted. There is a recently formed group which has been advocating on behalf of persons with disabilities and especially youths*”.

Alexander Tetteh from the Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled (GSPD) shared that GSPD is a national organization of persons with physical disabilities in Ghana. They comprise all the 10 regions with a total membership of about 5,050 people. The mission of the organization is to seek the welfare of its members by creating awareness of their capacities and the capabilities, lobbying and advocating for their rights and responsibilities. Alexander

says that *”The situation of disabled youth employment in Ghana is very alarming. The Government is doing very little about it. Almost everyday the number of disabled beggars on the street increase. OPWDs went on the street in January this year to express our displeasure about the delay in pass the Disability bill”*.

In Cambodia, Long Ly of the National Centre of Disabled Persons in Phnom Penh, states that: *“My main responsibility is to facilitation to employment opportunities throughout Cambodia. Even I have not much time to respond and share my experience but have spend some of my time to read and learn from other friends who work in the field of disabilities. As you may know the situation in Cambodia that most of our disabled people was cause by landmine, and the law of people with disabilities right was still on the process since the draft has developed nearly a decade.”*

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. Some participants did feel that they do have some highly effective practices upon which to build.

In Bangladesh Ayub Nabi Molla, the general secretary/chief executive of Save the Planet and Disability (SPD), states that: *“SPD has been implementing Disability-based human development training, Vocational training, Primary health care, Health-based training, AIDS prevention campaigning, Sanitation, Environmental pollution prevention, referral for treatment and treatment support, Special Education, Integrated education, Disability employment rehabilitation, Primary health rehabilitation, Schooling, Advocacy and Lobbying, Job placement and job creation, Individual Income Generating Project, recreation, movement support, Credit support, etc. and achieved tremendous achievements. But we could not attract the big and big donors for the development of the persons with disabilities of the*

remote area of Bangladesh, which area has been neglected for 250 years”. He continues to humbly seek support to expand their services in these outlying regions.

Nafeesur Rahman of the National Forum of Organizations working with the Disabled (NFOWD) people in Bangladesh, following an earlier posting made on this e-discussion group, writes that *”A few months back, at a public meeting, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh declared a separate 1% quota in all cadre service jobs in the Government of Bangladesh specifically for persons with disabilities. Taking a cue from that, the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Depart of Social Services is working hard to find positive ways to actually bring this declaration into practice. A high level committee has been formed and they are looking at all the pros & cons, and other rules and regulations etc. that have been found to impede the quota system in the past. Since NFOWD is the only recognized national coordination body of NGOs, with also the right kind of experience in this field in Bangladesh, and also since we have always been working as an interface between the Government and the NGOs in this field here, - we have been brought into this committee. We have been asked to help by also putting together a sort of a list of the jobs that could be taken up by people with disabilities, according to the type and grade of disability. We often passionately say that there are practically no jobs that are impossible for people with disabilities! But we do need to consider that, in a developing country like ours, we cannot afford many of the highly sophisticated gadgets or assistive devices that are widely used in some highly developed countries. So we do recognize that there are many jobs that could be extremely difficult, if not impossible for people with disabilities. But that may also mean that we are undermining the potentials of some very talented disabled persons. We ARE treading on VERY thin ice here!!!”*

Section 3. A Success Story

Vashkar Vhattachearjee

“

Few things from my life. My family didn't know where I should go to school, because people in Bangladesh think that blind people can do nothing. Most people think that it is impossible for a blind person to get an education. My family was very frustrated. My father heard from an eye doctor that there was a primary school for the blind in Chittagong, and I was admitted to that school. After leaving that primary school, I attended a junior high school for sighted children. It was very hard for me, because there were no Braille books, and the teachers did not

know how to teach blind children. After leaving junior high school, I also went to a high school for sighted students. After leaving the primary school for the blind and entering mainstream education, I discovered that there was a lack of facilities for blind people. At junior high and high school, there were no Braille books, very few writing frames and Braille paper. After leaving high school, I tried to enter many universities, but they all refused my application because of my blindness. Therefore, some other blind applicants and I began a hunger strike. Suddenly, the university decided to let us enter, but again there were no facilities. The university teachers didn't know anything about Braille or how to teach blind students. Some of the teachers cooperated with us, but some did not. For example, one day in class I was taking notes on my Braille slate, but the teacher thought I was playing. He told me to stop playing, stand up and leave the room. I complained to the head of the department, and I showed the teacher who had asked me to leave his class that I had actually been taking continued.....notes, not playing. He was very surprised when I read my Braille notes to him. He thought it was like magic. An example of a problem I faced is when I invited a government high official to a seminar about white cane safety day. When I entered his office, he gave me some money and didn't talk to me. This is because he thought that blind people are beggars. After he had given me the money, I was very shocked, and I could not stop my tears. I gave my invitation letter to him, and suddenly he realized what he had done. He apologized, and eventually came to the seminar, and said that he had come to learn about visually impaired people. After birth, there were no hospitals or doctors in my village. I bled from my nose and mouth. My family did not do anything. When I was two years old, my family realized that I was blind, and their dreams about my future were shattered.

What is the most popular job of the blind in Bangladesh? This is a difficult question to answer. Very few blind people in Bangladesh have a job. Most of them are still begging in the road. Some of the blind people who have jobs work as teachers in schools for the blind, as lawyers, or in NGOs. Even if a blind person receives a university education, it is often very difficult for him to find a job. I like to meet and make friends with many different people. I like singing and dancing. I am a member of a musical group composed entirely of blind people in my country. I've been studying hard to achieve my goals. Did you know that in my country we have no Braille libraries? Because of this, I have been studying how to set up a Braille library? I hope to set up a Braille library in Bangladesh one day. I also want to start a centre for the blind where people can learn about Bangladeshi culture, receive education, and study how to use computers. I think that reading, writing, and finding information by computer are vital tools for blind people to live independently. Of course, they cannot afford to buy a computer, but they could come to my centre and use a computer freely. For this reason, I need to learn much more, and I would like to cooperate with all the organizations and individuals to achieve this dream. I would like to give you some information about visually impaired people in my country. In Bangladesh we have 130 million people. 10 per cent are disabled. 1.2 million people are blind. However, only 1 per cent of blind people are educated. Life for girls is especially difficult, because they have no chance to marry, find a job or receive an education. Most blind people come from very poor families. We don't have any good advocacy organizations for blind people which could campaign for our rights. Now, disabled people: organizations are gaining strength, but blind people: organizations are not included. Organizations work in Bangladesh, of course, but they do not seem to think about blind people. I don't know if the World Blind Union is thinking about Bangladesh. However, last year at the Osaka Blind Summit, there was no representative from Bangladesh, so I asked many questions to the WBU president on behalf of Bangladeshi blind people. I would like to appeal now to all of you visually impaired people.

Now is the time to help the visually impaired in Bangladesh”

Section 4. Final Recommendations

From the analysis of this week the following suggestion/recommendations come out:

- 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 make Governments adopting the International acknowledgements of the right of people with disability.

Additional readings and websites

1. **http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Employment-and-Traning/Disability_Employment_Policy.pdf**
1. Website: Company Disability Toolkit. This website was developed to help employers in the UK to help them achieve “best disability practices.” It features a comprehensive checklist. For more information: www.disabilityaware.org.
2. Books: the US Department of Education and the US Chamber of Commerce jointly developed Disability Employment 101. It includes information about how to find qualified workers with disabilities and employment research into practices and how to model what other businesses have done. See www.edpubs.org/webstore/Contents/search.asp.
3. National Collaborative Workforce and Disability/Youth (NCWD) publication on intermediary roles www.ncwd-youth.info
4. www.AbilityAsia.org - guidance and general ideas from the ILO
5. Information about IBM hiring of people with disabilities, including their work with the National Technical Institute for the Deaf as an Intermediary www.workforce.com/section/09/feature/23/74/24/indexhtml
6. The Center on Human Policy has a new web-based project to help teachers at the middle and high school levels integrate disability studies into the regular school curriculum. The title of the project is "Disability Studies for Teachers" and it can be accessed at: www.disabilitystudiesforteachers.org. The web site includes lesson plans, organized according to units (topics), with background essays and links to a variety of publicly accessible web sites containing historical source documents. It also has essays on why teachers should include disability in their teaching and on "differentiated instruction" (how to adapt the curriculum for diverse learning styles).
7. For businessman who want to sell products and services at the global level or want to share experiences, ideas and information join the Blind Businessmen list by sending a blank e-mail at blindbusinessmen-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
8. PRD-L (Poverty Reduction and Disability Listserver) is a listserver for people who want to use email to discuss issues, or share resources information and ideas, related to poverty reduction among people with disabilities of any age in developing countries. This is currently a very quiet list: sometimes days or weeks go by between posts. But I think it has the potential to become an interesting and informative list if enough people participate. To join, contact the listowner, PATRICK BURKE, at: burke@ucla.edu or you can also sign up via the web at: <http://lists.ucla.edu/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/prd-l>.
9. The Intl-Dev (International Development) email distribution list distributes announcements about job opportunities, internship opportunities, possible funding sources for research related to international development, and so forth. To join, contact the

listowner AMY WILSON at: amy.wilson@gallaudet.edu) Or, you can also sign up for Intl-Dev via the web at: <http://gri.gallaudet.edu/mailman/listinfo/intl-dev>.

10. Deafintl (Deaf Empowerment and Advancement Fellowship INternational List) - deafintl is for people who share an interest in economic, social, human, political, educational, and health issues related to deaf people in developing countries. Deafintl has more than 250 deaf and hearing members from more than 30 developing and developed countries. Participants use email to exchange information, ideas, advice, and resources related to the empowerment of deaf people in developing countries, just like we have been doing for the past few weeks. Like PRD-L, deafintl is usually very quiet -- often days or weeks go by between posts. But deafintl has existed since 1998, and when people do post, it is often very interesting. To learn more about deafintl, or to join up, contact: owner-deafintl@waste.org or you can follow the instructions on the deafintl web site at: <http://patriot.net/~ashettle/deafintl>

11. In Australia there was an initiative for the development of practical technical aids and assistive technology for PWD. They have a book of practical designs for PWD. See <http://www.technicalaidnsw.org.au/resources/tabook.html> for a copy of the TADAID Book. The TAD (Technical Aid to the Disabled) organization seeks to develop local solutions to complex problems by teaming up individuals with technicians who design the aids required by the person in their environment. For more information see <http://www.technicalaidnsw.org.au/index.html>

12. Trace Research & Development Center
<http://www.trace.wisc.edu/>
Traumatic Brain Injury Resource Guide
<http://www.neuroskills.com/~cns/fmlywks.html>
ADAPT of Texas
<http://www.adapt.org/>
Oklahoma ABLE Tech Assistive Technology Project of Oklahoma
<http://okabletech.okstate.edu/>
The Ability Project
<http://www.ability.org/>
Assistive Technology and Occupational Therapy
<http://www.swattech.com/>
EnableLink (Canadian)
<http://www.enablelink.org/>
The Canadian Abilities Foundation
http://www.enablelink.org/about_abilities.html
Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Canada.
<http://www.sbhac.ca/>
Disabled Peoples' International
<http://www.dpi.org/>
Web Accessibility Initiative
<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>
Microsoft Accessibility and Disabilities Site
<http://microsoft.com/enable/>
Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies

<http://www.crds.org/>
National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html?src=mr>
tell-us-your-story.com is a disability discussion forum for those of us with disabilities
<http://www.tell-us-your-story.com/>
National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research
<http://www.ncddr.org/>
disABILITY Information and Resources
<http://www.makoa.org/>
National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials
<http://www.nchrtm.okstate.edu/>
News & Advocacy in Disability Rights
<http://www.mainstream-mag.com/>
the Brejcha Personal and disABILITY Resource Site
<http://www.netreach.net/~abrejcha/>
Alliance for Technology Access
<http://www.ataccess.org/>
Kennedy Krieger Institute
<http://www.kennedykrieger.org/>