

March Newsletter: Work and Accessibility

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Advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide



April Newsletter: Women and Disability



"When we talk about gender based violence, the experience of women with disability, the majority of the time, is left out of the conversation – Photographer Margherita

Sharing in the Post-2015 Agenda: RI Global and Women's Groups at CSW60

Last December, a group of women in the village of Chancho, Ethiopia visited the local clinic to give the nurses a much-needed hand. They changed sheets and tidied up the ten bed-ridden patients; brought products from the local dairy farm to share; and chatted – comforting the sick women and providing them with a support system.

This solidarity wouldn't likely happen without the Women's Health Association of Ethiopia (WHAE), a local NGO established in 2011 to train and unite women in rural communities. Supported by the Norwegian Women's Public Health Association (NKS), the two organizations met and shared insights on working together to achieve the new Sustainable Development Goals during the 60th Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations from 14-24 March.

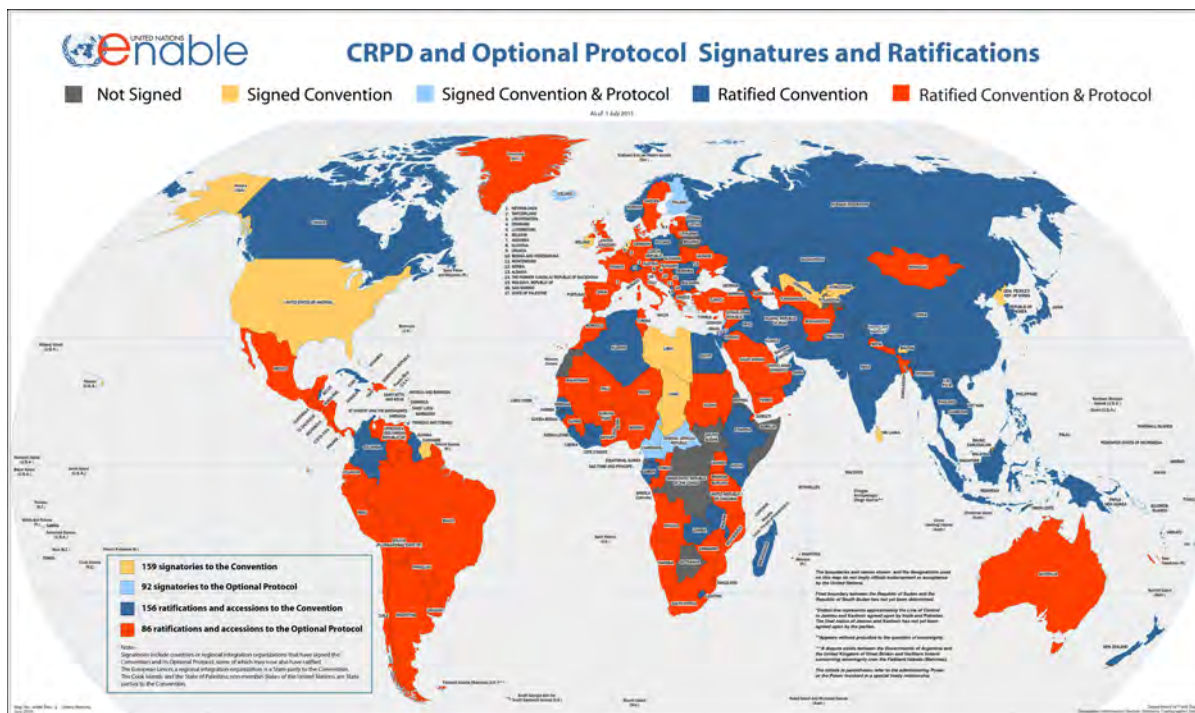
“Through my experience in WHAE, I have learned two things: a women know what's good for them, even if they don't think it's possible and sustainable development is not about providing women with the things they need, but demonstrating belief in their ideas,” said WHAE Director Birikit Terefe.

Jan Monsbakken, the President of RI Global who moderated the panel, said the NKS “has always been a close partner of Rehabilitation International” in its mandate. “Twenty percent of the women they work with include women with disabilities,” he added. “NKS has contributed to building disabilities and the overall health of women into the Norwegian welfare system; its sister organization, WHAE, can be a similar strength in the Ethiopian society.”

Overall, women with disabilities raised significant attention at the CSW60, as disabled panelists discussed the impact of the Sustainable Development Goals on their lives in the context of government program cuts on women with disabilities (Goal 1: Poverty); of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including forced sterilization (Goal 3: Health); of gender-based and sexual violence (Goal 5: Gender Equality), and finally, of access to justice (Goal 16: Peace and Justice).

One exhibit at CSW60 brought specific attention to the plight of women with disabilities: [Silent Tears](#), a multi-media project by internationally renowned photographer Belinda Mason. The Australian government [co-hosted an event with the Silent Tears Project](#), including an expert panel on the intersections of disability with culture, gender and other forms of discrimination. The exhibition – still featured at the [Silent Tears](#) website – acknowledged that violence does happen to women

with disabilities, and that violence against women also causes disabilities.



A UN Enable map of the countries that have adopted the CRPD. The Next Conference of States Parties takes place in June.

Conference of the States Parties to the CRPD

From 14-16 June at the UN Secretariat in New York, the election of nine Members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will take place to replace the independent experts whose terms are due to expire on 31 December 2016.

Nominations are due by 14 April 2016. The nominations and biographical data, preferably in accordance with the biographical data form, should be submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Office at Geneva, CH-1211 Geneva 10 and in electronic version: English, French or Spanish (Word) to registry@ohchr.org. Nominations will only be processed when submitted in Word Format and within the page limit (one-and-a-half pages: Roman Text 12).



At its conference in May, UNISDR will celebrate the first anniversary of the Sendai Framework, which was adopted at a UN Conference in Sendai, Japan on 11 March 2015.

UNISDR Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disabilities

Hosted by the Government of Mexico in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the UNISDR Global Platform will take place in Cancun, Mexico, from 24-26 May 2017 to review progress made in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. It will also provide a forum for the sharing of experiences on the road to meeting the Sendai Framework's seven global targets, as well as including people with disabilities in disaster planning.

In Mexico, UNISDR will celebrate the first anniversary of the Sendai Framework, which was adopted at a UN Conference in Sendai, Japan on 11 March 2015. Through the Sendai Framework and the Global Platform, attendees hope to encourage UN Member States to look beyond disaster management to tackling the risks which drive disaster losses including poverty, unplanned urbanization, environmental degradation and poor risk governance. RI Global remains committed to ensuring extensive and inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations in the preparation of the Global Platform and will send President Jan Monsbakken to the conference. More information is available at www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform.



RI Global Secretary-General Venus Ilagan with Noel Roger, President of ABILYMPICS France, host of the 9th Abilympics in Bordeaux.

RI HAPPENINGS AROUND THE GLOBE

RI Global Attends Abilympics

South Korea took the most medals for the sixth straight year at this year's International Competition for the People with Special Needs and Disabilities, also known as Abilympics, held in Bordeaux, France.

The South Korean team, comprised of many veteran vocational workers, won 14 gold, eight silver and two bronze medals, while Taiwan took second in medals and China third in the competition, which brought together 650 professionals from 33 countries to challenge each other in more than 40 tests in five categories: crafts, services, technology, energy and industry. Abilympics participants demonstrated their various abilities from preparing fine French cuisine to creating projects of modern industrial design.

RI Global Secretary-General Venus Ilagan attended the 9th contest, reminding competitors that a rights-based approach to development, which Abilympics champions, “levels the playing field” so that youth or working age, can access jobs, education and other vocational services. “A right-based approach is one that employs ways for the removal of physical and social barriers, for rethinking policies and changing attitudes,” she said.

The IA, first held in Tokyo in 1981 and subsequently takes place every four years, was launched by the United Nations to commemorate the International Day of persons with Disabilities as part of efforts to improve vocational skills, to boost motivation, and to promote stability by increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities.

“Often, employers see more the disability rather than the ability to deliver good performance and output,” Ilagan said. “I think that we’ve seen here that when given the opportunity not only to showcase, but also to demonstrate their skills and abilities, people with disabilities can be productive members of their families and communities.”

RI Global Executive Committee Meeting in Japan

From 9-10 April, the RI Global Executive Committee will meet in Tokyo, Japan to discuss issues relative to the future of RI and to finalize plans for the 23rd World Congress in Edinburgh. They will also meet from 22-24 October in Edinburgh, ahead of the World Congress.



Disability activists have charged Twitter with ignoring them in an ongoing discussion about hate speech on the social network.

NEWS TO USE

Campaigners Cast Doubt on Twitter's Commitment to Disable Protection

In February, Twitter, the fastest growing social media site launched the [Twitter Trust and Safety Council](#), to help control trolling and other unsafe messaging. But disability rights organisations have charged the company with ignoring their input – and ultimately, their security.

As the platform works to “develop products, policies, and programs,” the council will help Twitter “tap into the expertise and input of organizations at the intersection of these issues more efficiently and quickly.” The council comprises dozens of organizations, including the Internet Watch Foundation, the Safer Internet Centre,

and Feminist Frequency.

Disability experts, however, maintain that the company did not reach out to any disability alliance for the Council. If the site chastens abusers, advocates say it does so only temporarily.

“First they tell you unwanted replies are legitimate, then that you should block the person, and that if it escalates to threats, contact the police,” said David Gillon, an online disabled activist who has actively monitored the disablist abuse since 2013. “There is no coverage of harassment and abuse short of threats of violence.” Twitter has so far declined comment or to make a change in the Council makeup. To lobby the organization, reach out to <https://about.twitter.com/safety/council>



President Barack Obama meets with Disability Visibility Project founder Michelle Wong via video at the White House.

MORE NEWS TO USE

The Disability Visibility Project Sheds Light on Disabled Lives

In many ways, it's easy to understand the reasons people with disabilities have been frequently forgotten and ignored over the years: society certain rules about how to interact with the disabled. Primarily, people are taught not to stare.

However, the Disability Visibility Project (DVP) wants people to look – and read and share. Founded by Alice Wong, a researcher at the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences for the University of California, San Francisco, the DVP is a community partnership with StoryCorps, a national oral history organization aimed at collecting the diverse voices of people in the disability community and preserve their history for all.

Begun in July 2014, the DVP's original target was a year of operation. Due to its popularity, however, the DVP extended its relationship with StoryCorps indefinitely. It currently has more than 1,000 oral histories, which Wong will gradually post in short audio clips with text transcript on the website later this year. For more information or to participate, visit <http://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/>

Wisdom from a Chair: Thirty Years of Quadriplegia

Andrew Batavia believed the key to happiness was to find a good mission in life, to make it one's life's work, to take that work very seriously, and not to take oneself seriously. For thirty years, however, Batavia did not go to a single public place or event in which he was not "part of the show" – people appeared infinitely interested in how he lived without the use of arms, legs, or hands, which presented innumerable challenges and questions about what his life was like and whether they could survive under similar circumstances.

Batavia, a lawyer, a White House Fellow who worked with the Office of the US Attorney General to help draft the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and a proponent of the rights of individuals with disabilities to make their own decisions in life and at death, died in 2003. But he was convinced that most people could survive in a wheelchair and that humans have a remarkable capacity to adapt to almost any conditions. He never resented the voyeurism; as a person who was not disabled for the first sixteen years of his life, he was certain that he would have been similarly curious had he not severed his spinal cord in 1973. He started a memoir before his early death in 2003 at the age of 45 and his brother, Mitchell – an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy at NYU – finished it. *Wisdom from a Chair: Thirty Years of Quadriplegia* is available this month on Amazon, BarnesandNoble.com, Apple (for iPads, iPods and iPhones) and BookLocker.com.



Cambiando Vidas, a group of Latinos with disabilities will have its first conference at the University of Illinois Chicago in May.

CONFERENCES

Disability and Global Health -- Innovative Practices and Human Resources

According to WHO/World Bank's World Report on Disability (2011), approximately 15 percent of the world's population, or 1 billion people, live with a disability. It is also estimated that 90-150 million are children, most living in low- and middle-income countries; about 110-190 million are adults. These projections will likely increase due to global population ageing, more frequent chronic diseases and mental illnesses, and environmental factors such as traffic injuries, climate change, disasters and conflict.

The Faculty of Health and Social Sciences at Bergen University College, Norway, in collaboration with Duke University, U.S., invite researchers and practitioners within the field of disability and health to a conference in Bergen to counter these dismal statistics. From 23-25 June attendees to the Disability and Global Health Conference will learn and collaborate on successful re/habilitation, increased independence and how both can lead to participation in education, employment and society. They will also examine how, indirectly, enablement/re-ablement alleviates care responsibilities for families and reduces pressure on health systems. Finally, they will take stock of appropriate services in response to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN 2006). The Deadline for registration is 1 May 2016. For more

information on participation and accommodation, see:

<http://www.hib.no/en/research/dissemination/conferences/disability-and-global-health/program/>

Empowering the Community of Latinos with Disabilities

Cambiando Vidas, a group of Latinos with disabilities who organize, educate and train other Latinos with disabilities about self-esteem, civil rights, and services, along with students from the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) have organized the “National Conference for Latinos with Disabilities” to create a network of community organizations and service providers that serve Latinos with disabilities.

To address the lack of community organizing, as well as communication and unity among different organizations that serve Latinos with disabilities, the first conference will take place 25 May 2016. Attendees will receive instruction in the intersectionality of disability and Latino culture to better understand the experiences, needs and barriers that many Latinos with disabilities face, as well as immigration, lack of access to healthcare, employment and knowledge of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For more information, visit <http://latinxdisabilityconference.weebly.com/> or Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/LatinosWithDisabilities>



The Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation for the Disabled (PSRD) expanded 30,000 square feet this year and opened a College of Rehabilitation Services.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Pakistani Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled

The journey started in 1957 in two small rooms in the Mayo Hospital. But in 2015, the Pakistani Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled had its biggest year to date, expanding on its 30,000 square feet with an Outdoor Department, Limb Workshop, a third operation theatre, additional general ward and private rooms to accommodate the growing number of patients with disabilities. The organization, based in Lahore, also established the PSRD College of Rehabilitation Services to award the degree of Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT, 5 years) in affiliation with Pakistan's University of Health Sciences.

The diploma rounds out PSRD's educational programs, which started with a two-year degree in the Medical Laboratory, Operation Theatre and Physical Therapy through the Punjab Medical Faculty. But the NGO still has miles to go in research and in treatment, according to Muhammad Parvez Masud, the PSRD President.

“Although we have accomplished much, we are far from achieving our goal of

making every disabled person a valued and productive member of society,” Masud said. "This involves not only locating and identifying the disabled, many of them living in rural areas, but also providing them with accessible facilities for treatment, education and rehabilitation.”

But small steps keep bringing PSRD closer. The Community Based Rehabilitation Outreach (CBR) program continued with the prevention of diseases and disabilities in the rural population through immunization programs and primary health care education. Working in coordination with the Punjab Directorate of Health, staff administered 9,664 children up to age 5 with polio drops and vitamins A and E drops; the CBR Mobile Team referred dozens of major musculoskeletal conditions to PSRD for immediate treatment. Additionally, the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre had one of its best years, administering Rs. 20,000 loans to 51 people with disabilities to train for work – payback was nearly 100 percent.

And in the realm of education and preparation of disabled youth for the future, the PSRD High School continued as a model, providing 256 students with transport, uniforms, extracurricular activities and schooling, with six students sitting for national matriculation exams. For more information on the disability center that is making a difference in a severely underserved region, see <http://www.psr.org.pk/>



Create a more inclusive world

RI WORLD CONGRESS 2016 | EDINBURGH

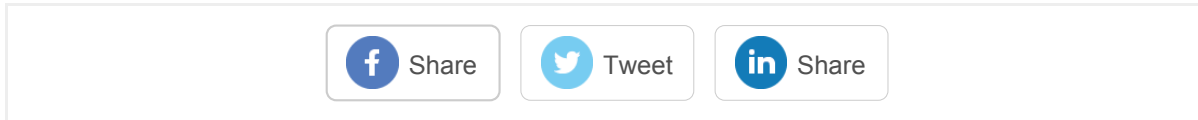
RI WORLD CONGRESS

World Congress at Abilympics

At the Abilympics, RI Global Secretary-General Venus Ilagan invited all who attended to the 23rd World congress to be held in Edinburgh, Scotland from 25-27 October with the timely and important theme of access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. “The Congress is an opportunity for you to meet with members of the global family of Rehabilitation International – all of them working at various levels to help build better lives for people with disabilities.”

Celebrating the theme “Create a more inclusive world”, RI Global has put together a complete training and information program for hotels, restaurants, taxi drivers, police and even border guards in order to make this a truly barrier free and enjoyable

experience. Book before 30 April 2016 and join senior politicians, leading academics and leaders from organisations such as the ILO, WHO and UN at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre in Scotland for just £405. [Book your accommodation today](#). Read more about the 2016 [RI World Congress](#).



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