

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

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**Success Knows
No Limitations!**



Directorate of Research
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Preface

Technical Sergeant Johnny McCray, U.S. Air Force, a Budget Analyst in the 319th Operations Group at Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota, served as a participant in the Topical Research Intern Program (TRIP) at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) from April 1 to April 30, 2004. He conducted the necessary research to prepare this report. The Institute thanks TSgt McCray for his contributions to the research efforts of DEOMI.

Scope

The Topical Research Intern Program provides the opportunity for Service members and civilians of the Department of Defense (DoD) and U.S. Coast Guard to work on a diversity/equal opportunity project while on a 30-day tour of duty at the Institute. During their tours, the interns use a variety of primary and secondary source materials to compile research pertaining to an issue of importance to equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) personnel, supervisors, and other leaders throughout the Services. The resulting publications (such as this one) are intended as resource and educational materials and do not represent official policy statements or endorsements by the DoD, U.S. Coast Guard or any of their agencies. The publications are distributed to EO/EEO personnel and senior officials to aid them in their duties. To reach the widest audience possible, the publications are posted on the Internet at: <https://www.patrick.af.mil/deomi/deomi.htm>.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the military Services, Department of Defense, or U.S. Coast Guard.

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Introduction

The concept that humans have inalienable rights and liberties that cannot justly be violated by others or by the state is linked to the history of the United States. America was founded on this concept and inscribed it in the Constitution that all men are created equal. Civil rights and liberties of American citizens are largely embodied in the Bill of Rights and in similar provisions in state constitutions (Encarta, n.d.). Civil rights laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were added to these provisions to assure equal opportunity in education, housing, transportation, and health care for people with disabilities in the United States (Department of Labor, 2004). The terms civil rights and civil liberties, conjure up thoughts and images of racial and gender struggles, however, the terms now cover a vastly different meaning with the concept of struggle, especially in regards to the ADA.

The primary focus of this paper is on the ADA which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions. The document which prohibits discrimination against qualified disabled employees or applicants for employment in the Federal sector, is the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. However; some of the ADA's nondiscrimination standards have been incorporated into section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Civil rights and civil liberties are political and social concepts that refer to guarantees of freedom, justice and equality the state pledges to its citizens. Civil rights are used to imply that the state has a positive role in ensuring all citizens equal protection under law and equal opportunity to exercise the privileges of citizenship and otherwise to participate fully in national life, regardless of race, religion, sex, or any other characteristic. Civil liberties are used to refer to guarantees of freedom, speech, press, or religion; to due process of law, and to other limitations on the power of the state to restrain or dictate the actions of individuals (Delgado, n.d.) Additionally, the two concepts of equality and liberty are overlapping and interacting. Equality implies the ordering of liberty within society so that the freedom of one person does not infringe on the rights of others, just as liberty implies the right to act in ways permitted to others and this is precisely the intent of disability laws. Throughout the world today, governments are creating laws that recognize the disabled as citizens who deserve to live and work with dignity and freedom. The ADA is one statute that demonstrates this concept in the United States. It is a commitment by the American people to provide *dignity and freedom* to those with disabilities and provide them the right to take an active part in society.

What Constitutes "Disability"?

In February 2001, President George W. Bush said:

My Administration remains committed to ensuring that the more than 54 million Americans with disabilities learn and develop skills, find meaningful work, and realize the promises of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To achieve equality of opportunity, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency, last year I announced the New Freedom Initiative, a comprehensive plan that promotes the full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of American life.

During the speech, President Bush stated the unemployment rate for Americans with disabilities was hovering at 70 percent (White House, 2001).

According to the National Organization on Disability, more than 54 million Americans have disabilities of every type and degree; representing about one-fifth of the U.S. population (Presidential Candidates Speak Out on Disability Issues, 2004). Although varied in text, each federal agency has developed definitions to define what constitutes disability. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines what constitutes “disability” in two parts. The two types of definitions for disability are statutory and regulatory (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.).

ADA Statutory Definition

The statutory term that constitutes disability means: (A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; (B) a record of such an impairment; or (C) being regarded as having such an impairment.

The first part of the definition covers persons who actually have physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities. Very importantly, the focus under the first part is on the individual, to determine if he or she has a substantially limiting impairment (Part A as stated above) or is perceived as having a substantially limiting impairment (Part C as stated above). To fall under the first part of the definition, a person must establish three elements:

- That he or she has a physical or mental impairment
- That substantially limits
- One or more major life activities.

The second and third part of the definition cover persons who may not have an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity but who have a history of, or have been misclassified as having, such a substantially limiting impairment, or who are perceived as having such a substantially limiting impairment. The focus under the second and third part of the definition is based on the reaction of other persons to a history of impairment or to a perceived impairment. So, any history or perception of an

impairment that substantially limits a major life activity is in-fact a “disability”, according to parts two and three.

Thus, individuals with disabilities as defined by the first part of the definition must have an actual impairment. Individuals with disabilities as defined by the second and third part of the definition must have a record of substantially limiting impairment or be regarded as having a substantially limiting impairment. This definition is tailored purposely to eliminate any discrimination.

ADA Regulatory Definition

The regulatory definition is a physical or mental impairment which include:

1. (a)ny physiological disorder, or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genito-urinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine; or
2. (a)ny mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

The regulatory coverage of the definition does not set forth an exclusive list of specific impairments; its purpose is to describe the type of conditions that constitute an impairment and, the types of conditions that are not impairments. For instance, the regulatory coverage of America’s statute and legislative history specifically state that certain conditions are not impairments under the ADA (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.). The term does not include homosexuality and bisexuality. It does not include environmental, cultural and economic disadvantages such as a prison record or a lack of education. In addition, age by itself is not an impairment.

For example, a person who has a medical condition often associated with age (such as hearing loss, osteoporosis, or arthritis) has an impairment on the basis of the medical condition not simply because he or she is advanced in years. It is essential therefore, to distinguish between conditions that are impairments and those that are not impairments. A person has a disability only if his or her limitations are regarded as being the result of an impairment but not everything that restricts a person’s major life activities is an impairment. In another example, a person may have financial problems that significantly restrict what that person does in life. Financial problems or other economic disadvantages, however, are not impairments under the ADA. Thus, the person in this situation does not have a “disability” as the term is defined by the ADA. On the other hand, an individual may be unable to cope with everyday stress because he or she has a bipolar disorder. Bipolar disorder is an impairment. In this situation, the individual's impairment substantially limits a major life activity.

Impairment versus Non-Impairment

The ADA protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination in job application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. The statute's intent is to prohibit specific forms of discrimination that persons with true disabilities face. The EEOC guidance that defines disability for federal agencies recognizes that there are stereotyped assumptions about what constitutes an impairment and addresses unfounded concerns about the limitations of individuals with disabilities. The statutory and regulatory coverage along with the ADA, combat the effects of any misperceptions that may form barriers. Together they identify persons with substantially limiting impairment and distinguish between those who do not. For example, it is generally clear whether a person is of a particular race, national origin, age, or sex that is alleged to be the basis of discrimination. By contrast, it often is less clear whether a person's physical or mental condition constitutes an impairment of sufficient degree to establish that the person meets the definition of an individual with a disability. Provided below are examples of analytical determinations and four tables that identify impairment conditions (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.).

Determinations

Example 1: Sue has been unemployed for two years. Although she has actively sought work, Sue has not been able to find a job. Sue asserts that employers will not hire her because she is a convicted felon who served three years in prison for armed robbery. Sue argues that her prison record is a disability because it prevents her from getting a job. Sue, however, does not have a disability because she does not have a physical or mental impairment as defined by the ADA. A prison record is not an impairment for ADA purposes.

Example 2: Bob applies for a job as a cashier at his neighborhood supermarket. The store manager speaks with Bob briefly and then asks Bob to fill out a written job application form. Bob does not complete the form because he cannot read it. Bob, who has the equivalent of a second-grade education, was never taught to read. Bob does not have a physical or mental impairment as defined by the ADA. A lack of education is not an impairment for ADA purposes.

Example 3: Same as Example 2, above, except Bob cannot read because he has a severe form of dyslexia. Bob has an impairment as defined by the ADA. Dyslexia, a learning disability, is an impairment for ADA purposes.

Example 4: Sally, who is 63, has osteoporosis. Sally's age is not a physical or mental impairment as defined by the ADA but the condition is. Osteoporosis, a reduction in bone quantity, is an impairment as defined by the ADA.

Example 5: Jane is a lawyer who is impatient with her co-workers and her boss. She often loses her temper, frequently shouts at her subordinates, and publicly questions her boss's directions. Her colleagues think that she is rude and arrogant, and they find it difficult to get along with her. Jane does not have an impairment. Personality traits, such as impatience, a quick temper, and arrogance, in and of themselves are not impairments.

Example 6: Same as Example 5, above, except Jane's behavior results from a bipolar disorder. Jane has an impairment, bipolar disorder, as defined by the ADA.

Example 7: Joe is an account manager who is in charge of developing a major advertising campaign for his firm's biggest client. Although he used to be easygoing and relaxed in the office, Joe has become very irritable at work. He has twice lost his temper with his assistant, and he recently engaged in a shouting match with one of his superiors. Joe has consulted a psychiatrist, who diagnosed a recurrence of the post-traumatic stress disorder for which Joe was treated several years ago. Joe has an impairment. Joe's post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental disorder, is a mental impairment.

Example 8: Julie, a four-foot, ten-inch tall woman was denied employment as an automotive production worker because the employer thought she was too small to do the work. Julie does not have an impairment. Julie's height was below the norm, but her small stature was not so extreme as to constitute an impairment and was not the result of a defect, disorder, or other physical abnormality.

Example 9: Same as Example 8 above, except Julie has achondroplastic dwarfism. Julie's stature is the result of an underlying disorder, achondroplastic dwarfism, which is an impairment as defined by the ADA.

Example 10: Bill developed lung cancer as a result of smoking. This is an impairment. The cause of Bill's condition has no effect on whether that condition is an impairment.

Disability Conditions

Table 1

Disabilities - Emotional		
<u>Anorexia</u>	<u>Asperger's Syndrome</u>	<u>Attachment Disorder</u>
<u>Attention Deficit Disorder</u>	<u>Autism</u>	<u>Behavior Problems</u>
<u>Bipolar Disorder</u>	<u>Borderline Personality disorder</u>	<u>Conduct Disorder</u>
<u>Depression</u>	<u>Developmental Disabilities</u>	<u>Dysthymia</u>
<u>Emotional Problems</u>	<u>Encopresis</u>	<u>Enuresis</u>
<u>Fetal Alcohol Effect</u>	<u>Fetal Alcohol Syndrome</u>	<u>Failure to Thrive</u>
<u>Generalized Anxiety Disorder</u>	<u>Hyperactivity</u>	<u>Obsessive Compulsive Disorder</u>

Oppositional Defiant Disorder	Pervasive Developmental Disorder	Pica
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	Psychosis	Reactive-Attachment Disorder
Rett's Disorder	Schizo-Affective Disorder	Schizophrenia
Separation Anxiety Disorder	Speech Disorder	

Table 2

Disabilities-Physical		
AIDS (see also HIV)	Albinism	Allergies
Amputee	Anemia/Blood Disorder	Angelman Syndrome
Aphasia	Asperger's Syndrome	Asthma
Attention Deficit Disorder	Blindness	Cancer
Cerebral palsy	Cleft Lip	Cleft Palate
Craniofacial Anomalies	Crohn's Disease	Cystic Fibrosis
Deaf/Profound Hearing Loss	Developmental Disabilities	Diabetes
Dwarfism	Dystonia	Epilepsy
Failure to thrive	Fetal Alcohol Effect	Hearing Loss Partial
Heart Defect	Heart Murmur	Hydrocephalus
Hyperactivity	Ichthyosis	Immune System Disorder
Irritable Bowel Syndrome	Kidney Disease	Metabolic Disorder
Microcephalus	Motility Disorders	Muscular Dystrophy
Neurofibromatosis	Neurological Impairment	Osteogenesis Imperfecta
Paralysis - Partial paraplegic	Paralysis - Quadriplegic	Perceptual Impairment
Phonological Disorder	Physical Disability	Progeria
Prune Belly Syndrome	Respiratory Problems	Rett's Disorder
Rheumatoid Arthritis	STD	Scoliosis
Seizure Disorder	Shaken Baby Syndrome	Sickle Cell Anemia
Sickle Cell Trait	Speech Disorder	Spina Bifida
Terminal Illness	Tourette Syndrome	Traumatic Brain Injury
Wheel Chair Dependent	Visually Impaired	

Table3

Disabilities - Mental Retardation		
Angelman Syndrome	Down Syndrome	Fetal Alcohol Effect
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome	Fragile X Syndrome	Hydrocephalus

Mental Retardation - cause not specified	Mental Retardation - Genetic	Microcephalus
Prader Willi Syndrome	Shaken Baby Syndrome	Trisomy 13
Trisomy 18	Williams Syndrome	

Table 4

Disabilities - Learning		
Central Auditory Processing Disorder	Developmental Coordination Disorder	Disorder of Written Expression
Dyscalculia	Dyslexia	Expressive Language Disorder
Non Specific Learning Disability	Receptive Language Disability	

(National Adoption Center, n.d. Adapted from American Psychiatric Association, 2000.)

Disability Issues

According to the National Organization on Disability, disabled individuals are three times more likely to live in poverty than non-disabled persons (National Organization on Disability, 2002). Issues such as, education, employment opportunities, transportation accessibility, and technological access are just a sample of some important issues that hinder the nation's disabled from fully participating as productive citizens in society. A report by the National Council on Disability stated:

Students with disabilities, who now are estimated to represent nearly 10 percent of all college students, currently experience outcomes far inferior to those of their non-disabled peers, despite the fact that research shows that they are more likely to obtain positive professional employment outcomes after degree completion than their peers (National Organization on Disability, 2002).

Contributions: Department of Defense

The Department of Defense (DoD) among other federal agencies is working hard to integrate Americans with Disabilities into the workforce and confront these challenges head on. In 1987, the Secretary of Defense established a DoD-wide goal to increase employment of individuals with targeted disabilities to two percent of DoD's civilian workforce. DoD recognizes that persons with disabilities have a right to full and fair consideration for any job for which they apply. It strives to offer an environment in which all can reach their highest potential. In sharp contrast, ignorance by America's total population in regards to individuals with disabilities remains high.

President William J. Clinton signed an executive order on July 26, 2000, directing the federal government to hire 100,000 employees with disabilities over the next five years. DoD quickly pledged to hire 32,000 candidates with qualified disabilities before

September 2005. The Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld further emphasized DoD's pledge by issuing a memorandum in October 2000 to the secretaries of the military departments and directors of defense agencies fully supporting the president's initiative. Mr. Rumsfeld asked them "to redouble your efforts to eliminate barriers in hiring and advancement of employees with qualified disabilities and to increase their opportunities for employment and advancement" (Williams, 2002; Federal Register, 2000).

DoD divided the five-year goal of 32,000 new hires by fiscal year. In fiscal year 2001, the goal was 4,763 new hires and 5,801 new hires in fiscal year 2002 for a grand total of 10,564. The actual hiring level during that timeframe was 11,963 new employees with qualifying disabilities; exceeding the two-year goal by almost 1,400 additional employees. By the end of fiscal 2003, DoD had hired 18,076 people with qualified disabilities against a goal of 17,245 for a phenomenal rate of 105 percent of the 2001-2003 goals (Williams, 2002).

The military departments and defense agencies aggressively pursued recruitment efforts that helped identify and target people with disabilities. In addition, DoD sent letters to over 250 colleges and universities to identify college graduates with qualifying disabilities to come work for the DoD. The DoD continues to send executives and general officers back to schools from which they graduated to recruit people with disabilities as well as individuals who do not need assistance to come work for the department. DoD hopes to hire 7,189 employees with disabilities in fiscal 2004, and 7,357 more in fiscal 2005 to accomplish its five-year goal of 32,000 new employees with disabilities (Vantran, 2003).

A national curriculum called, The Federal Workforce Recruitment Program refers more than 1,000 disabled students for employment in federal agencies each year. Each year the Office of the Secretary of Defense provides salaries and work years to fill over 200 of these summer jobs across the nation. DoD experience shows that a high proportion of students with disabilities who are working as DoD summer employees subsequently join DoD's permanent workforce. The latest data shows that the summer hire program is now funded at \$1.7 million per year (Department of Labor, n.d.).

By establishing the Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program (CAP), DoD is using other ways to accomplish its goal of increasing the representation of individuals with disabilities to two percent of its civilian workforce (Tricare, n.d.). CAP strives to provide assistive technology and accommodations to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to the information environment and opportunities in DoD. CAP's purpose is to ensure that all DoD employees with disabilities get the equipment that best suits their needs, at no charge to the employer. CAP also provides accommodations to ensure that DoD hospitals, clinics, personnel offices, training centers, and dependent schools are accessible. In addition, the CAP Office serves the DoD community by:

- Buying accommodations to make computer and telecommunications systems accessible to employees with disabilities, as required by Public Laws;
- Funding sign language interpreters, readers, and personal assistants for employees attending long-term training (two days or more); and
- Providing expertise in solving accessibility problems through the use of software, hardware, and other assistive technology.

CAP's services make DoD work environments more accessible to employees with visual, hearing, dexterity, cognitive, and communication impairments. Since its inception in October 1990, the CAP Office has provided over 14,000 accommodations throughout the DoD community. By aligning itself with DoD components in promoting awareness, team building, and reengineering, CAP ensures quality and timely support to the DoD community by working to achieve its mission (Department of Labor, n.d.). The TRICARE Management Activity, a field activity in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), serves as the executive agent for CAP. For effective management, the CAP staff assists DoD employees, supervisors, and managers. By ensuring the right accommodations, DoD is addressing issues involving technological access and ensuring people with disabilities have the power to excel.

The DoD continues to pursue technological breakthroughs for the disabled and is leading the way in accessibility implementation. According to a survey conducted by Harris Interactive, the Internet has had a positive effect on the lives of adults with disabilities (Employers Making A Difference, n.d.). DoD recognized immediately the Internet would provide educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities and authorized flexi-place and telecommuting options to address certain accessibility issues. DoD supports teleworkers with disabilities by purchasing hardware, software, and assistive technology for use in the individual's telework location off-site. DoD also provides closed captioning for those who need it. Closed captioning is technology that provides visual text to describe dialogue, background noise, and sound effects on television programming. DoD ensures the latest technologies are made accessible for individuals with disabilities at no cost.

The DoD has had a long-standing commitment to providing equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities and the commitment continues in other ways. Each year annual award ceremonies are held to award components that produce the best efforts in meeting the two percent goal. In addition, highly regarded certificate of achievements are awarded to outstanding employees with disabilities. Furthermore, to keep key personnel abreast of DoD policies and initiatives, DoD sponsors a Disability Forum each year and co-sponsors with other federal agencies the National Symposium on Employment of People with Disabilities (Williams, 2002).

Update: The New Freedom Initiative

For Americans with disabilities, employment is vital to independence, empowerment, and quality of life. And although challenges still abound, today Americans with disabilities enjoy improved access to education, government services, public accommodations, transportation, telecommunications, and employment opportunities. It was the landmark ADA of 1990 that removed the barriers and enabled many individuals with disabilities to find more opportunities to use their gifts and talents in the workplace. The New Freedom Initiative addressed specific challenges, to fulfill the promises of the ADA, and moved toward an America where all our citizens can live and work with dignity and freedom. This comprehensive plan is helping Americans with disabilities learn and develop skills, engage in productive work, make choices about their daily lives, and participate fully in their communities. The White House has issued a report on progress regarding President's Bush's New Freedom Initiative. The full text of the New Freedom Initiative 2004 Progress Report is available online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/newfreedom/newfreedom-report-2004.pdf> (White House Domestic Policy Council, 2004).

Global Perception

Governments around the world are lauding U.S. accomplishments on disability laws, equal rights passages and accessibility assistance for the disabled. Countries around the world are using America's success as a model to aid individuals with disabilities in their countries. The global market is recognizing that every able human is a resource that should be afforded the opportunity to benefit in their society and contribute to their economy. With the U.S. leading the way, the global community has engaged itself in assisting individuals with disabilities.

The idea that disability is an issue that mainly arises in developed countries with aging populations is fairly widespread despite being misleading...the time for showing the importance and relevance of disability in the context of developing countries is overdue (Disabled People and Economic Needs in the Developing World: A Political Perspective from Jordan, 2003).

According to The World Book Encyclopedia, in ancient times, our disabled ancestors were not assisted because the welfare of each group depended on the ability of its members to fight and work for survival (Disabled, 2003). Individuals with disabilities who could not fulfill their responsibilities threatened the safety of all therefore, many were driven away and left to die.

The World Book Encyclopedia also gives evidence that the Spartans let deformed newborns die of exposure. Rome in its glory days, allowed disfigured infants to be legally drowned by the parents. Some nobles of times past used people with physical disabilities as court jesters and many people with disabilities were burned as witches (Disabled, 2003). Throughout history, it appears people have ridiculed the disabled and

have regarded them with suspicion. Today, attitudes toward people with disabilities have changed for the better.

Presently, there are over 500 million people with disabilities worldwide; or 10 percent of the global population. Approximately two thirds are living in developing countries. In certain developing countries, nearly 20 percent of the general population is in some way disabled. And if the impact on their families is taken into account, approximately 50 percent of their population is affected (United Nations Enable, n.d.).

Disconcerting, the number of persons with disabilities continues to increase in tandem with the growth of the world population. Factors causing the increase in number include war, other forms of violence, inadequate medical care, natural and other disasters. Not surprisingly the majority of individuals with disabilities across the globe are poor. Most, perhaps as much as 80 percent, live in isolated rural areas. The result is, many live in areas where the services needed to help them are unavailable. Physical and social barriers in society, which hamper their full participation, severely handicap their lives. Because of this, people with disabilities in developing countries almost always face a life that is segregated, debased, and without help. The hard truth is the majority of individuals with disabilities will continue to live in isolation and insecurity. Some do, however, receive assistance from outside help (United Nations Enable, n.d.).

The United Nations (UN), founded after World War II, is an international organization of countries created to promote world peace and cooperation. One of the major development goals of the UN is monitoring and promoting the quality of life of the world's disadvantaged, including people with disabilities. Presently, one of the most significant issues being addressed by the international community is the accessibility of the disabled to new and emerging information technologies through computer literacy. For example, member nations of this organization believe the enormous international resources provided online by the Internet is one of the most effective ways for countries to share power. UN members have expressed that if they can link minds across cultures, geographical and economic boundaries, they believe a new global community, a "society for all", may be brought forth through its engagement. Thus, helping to establish a new discourse on human rights of all, especially people with disabilities (United Nations Enable, n.d.).

The United Nations Secretariat and the Economic and Social Council are the principal UN bodies concerned with disability issues across the globe. They are focused on promoting the rights of persons with physical disabilities and have enlisted the help of almost every governing body in the world. Projects concentrate on disability prevention and rehabilitation. In-addition, other anti-discrimination principles were established by such human rights instruments as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Together they form the most comprehensive international code of binding legal provisions in the area of human rights. The two Covenants develop and supplement the provisions of the UN's Universal Declaration, and the three instruments together make up what has come to be known as the International Bill of Human Rights (United Nations Enable, n.d.).

To ensure employment of people with disabilities across the globe, members of the UN have put together a team of legal minds to oversee the working groups concerned with disability issues. There are 27 government representatives, 12 non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives, one representative from a national human rights institution, one representative from each of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) organizations and five regional disability NGO representatives. All team members are well-respected leaders on disability and law with the highest credentials. Representatives' dedication in tearing down barriers that face individuals with disabilities is apparent (Morgan, 2004).

For example, Gerard Quinn, an Irish law professor, is a specialist in international disability law and is the lead representative for Rehabilitation International. Quinn, who received his doctorate in law from Harvard University with an emphasis on human rights, has worked in the European Commission on European Disability Policy, was the former Director of Research at the Irish government's Law Reform Commission and is currently the Director of the European Commission's Network of Disability Discrimination lawyers throughout Europe, as well as the Director of the Law School at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Quinn also sits as a member of the European treaty-monitoring body in the Council of Europe, in the field of social rights. His most recent publication, authored with Theresia Degener and others was "Human Rights and Disability", a 2002 report for the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Geneva (Morgan, 2004).

In addition to his legal expertise, Quinn has a very personal connection to disability as his eldest daughter, Niamh (Irish for ray of sunshine), was born with spina bifida in 1989. Following his daughter's birth, Quinn co-authored a book in 1993 on US, Canadian and Australian discrimination laws and was subsequently appointed by the Irish government to a high level commission of inquiry into the status of persons with disabilities in Ireland (Morgan, 2004).

In January 2004, a meeting was held at the UN Secretariat building in New York and was attended by all working group members. Like all members involved, Rehabilitation International's objective was to play an active role in important negotiations among governments and disability organizations. The agenda was to hammer out a draft disability convention text. Three people assisted Quinn during the two-week meeting: Rosemary Keyess, Aaron Dhir, and Mariyam Cementwala.

Rosemary Keyess is an Australian lawyer and lecturer with a disability who has been involved in disability issues for the past 15 years. She served as the Chairperson of the Disability Discrimination Legal Center, a focal point for the implementation of Australian disability law through the provision of both legal and policy advice. More recently she taught social sciences and policy at the University of New South Wales in Sydney (Morgan, 2004).

Aaron Dhir practiced law in Toronto, Canada, for four years, spending much of that time representing people with disabilities at, for example, involuntary commitment hearings. His interest in disability as a human rights issue was sparked during this time and he moved to the U.S. to study for a master's in law at New York University. Dhir's master's thesis is on the Convention and its particular application to those with mental disabilities (Morgan, 2004).

Mariyam Cementwala, who has a political science background from the University of California at Berkeley, studied under Quinn for her George A. Mitchell master's in law degree looking at human rights and disability law, and focusing specifically on non-discrimination. She is currently writing her thesis on the Convention process. Cementwala, who has a visual disability, previously worked with the World Bank doing research on inclusive education and children with disabilities (Morgan, 2004).

Famous Contributors

Stereotypes do exist that disabled people are stupid, incapable of doing anything, and generally worthless. Statistics show, more than 5 million people with disabilities are successfully employed year after year (LaPlant, n.d.). Many are in highly skilled employment, and many are even successful enough to become famous. Their contributions to society are mind-boggling and vary across spectrums of subjects and disciplines. In addition, many successful companies like Microsoft, IBM, United Airlines and McDonalds have benefited from the value of this class of employees (Microsoft, 1999). Studies conducted by major companies such as, E.I. Dupont and Bendix Corporation have even shown that this class of employees is some of the most productive, reliable, and valuable employees in the workplace (Employers Making A Difference, n.d.).

Many famous people suffer or did suffer with a disability. The below table taken from the civil rights section of New York state's, Natural Resources Conservation Service web site. The site can be accessed at: <http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Actors and Actresses

Sandy Duncan	Vision Impairment
Lou Ferrigno	Hearing Impaired
Annette Funicello	Multiple Sclerosis
Katherine Hepburn	Parkinson's Disease
Mary Tyler Moore	Diabetes, Drug and Alcohol Addiction
Patricia Neal	Stroke
Richard Pryor	Multiple Sclerosis

Sammy Davis, Jr. Vision Impairment, Cancer

Danny Glover Epilepsy

Marlee Matlin Deaf

Miscellaneous

Thomas Edison Hearing Impairment

Albert Einstein Dyslexia

Steven Hawking Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Lou Gehrig's Disease

Harriet Tubman Traumatic Brain Injury/Narcolepsy

Francisco Goya Deaf

Edgar Allen Poe Alcohol Addiction

H.G. Wells Epilepsy

Louis Braille Blind

Sigmund Freud Cancer

John Milton Blind

Helen Keller Blind, Deaf

Musicians

Ludwig von Beethoven Deaf

Ray Charles Blind

Ronnie Milsap Blind

Teddy Pendergrass Quadriplegia

Itzaac Perlman Paraplegia

Stevie Wonder Blind

Mel Tillis Stuttering

Jose Feliciano Blind

Athletes

Arthur Ashe AIDS

Jim Abbott	Has only one hand
Dennis Byrd	Spinal Cord Injury
Lou Gehrig	ALS/Lou Gehrig's Disease
Bruce Jenner	Learning Disability
"Magic" Johnson	AIDS
Wilma Rudolph	Post Polio Syndrome
Greg Louganis	Learning Disability/AIDS

Politicians

Alexander the Great	Epilepsy
Julius Caesar	Epilepsy
Winston Churchill	Learning disability
James Brady	Traumatic Brain Injury
Daniel Inouye	Amputation (WWII)
Ronald Reagan	Hearing Impairment/Alzheimer's Disease
Franklin D. Roosevelt	Polio
Teddy Roosevelt	Asthma, Visual Impairment
Bob Dole	Injury to Right Arm (WWII)
Woodrow Wilson	Learning Disability

Conclusion

Additional people such as Robin Williams and Whoopi Goldberg have disabilities. The list of famous individuals with disabilities is long and distinguished. It is admirable that people like those mentioned above and Helen Keller's unique impact on society have been recorded without prejudice. However, there are countless individuals with a disability who have made enormous contributions to society and elect to remain anonymous. As a nation, we should salute all people with a disability who face their individual challenges on a daily basis.

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