

Draft Minutes of the Fourth General Assembly Meeting

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,
Washington, DC, USA

25 — 26 May 2000

Attendance

The fourth Annual General Meeting of the Global Applied Disability Research and Information Network on Employment and Training (GLADNET) was held at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, USA. A total of 46 participants from 11 countries were in attendance.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Aldred H. Neufeldt, Chair of the GLADNET Association.

Welcoming Remarks

- Susanne Bruyère, GLADNET Board member and Director of the Program on Employment and Disability at Cornell University welcomed participants to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In her remarks, Dr. Bruyère explained the rationale for choosing the Carnegie Endowment as the venue for the meeting. She also gave background information on the school of Industrial and Labor relations at Cornell.
- Dr. Neufeldt, Chair, gave a brief history of the GLADNET Association. He also provided participants with an overview of the GLADNET InfoBase and how it relates to the proposed Knowledge Network.

Introduction of the Keynote Speaker

The keynote speaker, Jonathan Young, was introduced by Ilene Zeitzer, Special Assistant, Disability, US Social Security Administration.

Keynote Address

Disability and Employment - The American Policy Agenda

Jonathan Young
Deputy Director
Office of Public Liaison, The White House

Mr Young currently serves as Associate Director for Disability Outreach in the White House Office of Public Liaison, where he is in charge of White House outreach to the disability community. His appointment in August 1998 marked the first time a person with a disability has held this position, and he is now the highest- ranking person at the White House who specializes in disability issues.

In his address Mr Young spoke about White House goals. He noted that the policy focus of the Administration is on employment issues. He said that the levels of unemployment for persons with disabilities are unacceptable in the current US context of full employment. During his address, he spoke of concerns about the digital divide between people, that GLADNET, by bringing together divergent groups, is an excellent example of how the various constituents can learn from one another. A question and answer session followed.

The Employer Agenda

Session chair Dr. Susanne Bruyère, Cornell University, USA

- Susan Meisinger, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM). Ms Meisinger gave an overview of her organization and her perspective on the employment of persons with disabilities. SHRM is the largest human resources membership organization in the world, with 137,000 individual members. In her presentation, she noted that the number 1 disability issue facing human resources managers is disability management. She also noted that the labour shortages in the USA will enhance employment for persons with disabilities. However, barriers such as lack of skills and the employer resistance remain.
- William W. (Skip) Simonds, Director, Return to Work Programs, UNUM-Provident Corporation. Mr. Simonds noted that UNUM-Provident is the largest disability insurer in the world with 75,000 policy holders. Mr Simonds noted in his presentation that the means to the end (employment for persons with disabilities) are different in the disability consumer community and the corporate world. The key issue for the consumer movement is how to get the doors open to the corporate arena. For the business community, the key issue in disability is how to bring people back to work. How to resolve the return-to- work issue is the number 1 concern. He also noted that if the consumer community does not partner with business to resolve the RTW issue, it will not succeed in getting persons with disabilities into employment for their first work experience.
- Roger Wells, Rotary International Task Force on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities. Mr Wells provided an overview of the Rotary International and its Task Force, which seeks to create 500,000 jobs for disabled persons worldwide by 2002.

US Policy Makers

Session chair Dr. Monroe Berkowitz, Rutgers University, USA

- Dr. Richard Horne, President's Task Force on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities. The Task Force was created in March 1998 with the goal of bringing systems together across various government agencies. There are 18 agencies on the Task Force, and the Chair is the US Secretary of Labor. Task Force outputs include the Plan for Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Federal Government and a White House Conference on Mental Health. In its year 2000 report, the Task Force made 14 recommendations.
- Dinah Cohen, Director, Computer Accommodations Program, US Department of Defence. Ms Cohen gave an overview, and spoke of the benefits of a centrally funded accessibility program.
- Michael Greenberg, Deputy Associate Commissioner, Office of Employment Support Programs, US Social Security Administration. Mr Greenberg gave an overview of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act. He noted that the legislation represents increased employment opportunities for persons with disabilities as it addresses major barriers. It also places controls in the hands of the consumer. In his remarks, Mr Greenberg noted that access to health care is the major issue facing disabled persons.

International Perspectives

Session Chair, Mireille Dopchie, Agence Wallonne Pour l'Intégration des Personnes Handicapées, Belgium

- Stig Larsson, Director, Handicap and Rehabilitation, Research Centre, Lund University, Malmö Sweden. *The Third Sector and Work Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities*. In his presentation, Dr. Larsson noted that a lack of social network is the most important risk factor in mortality. He described the nature of the third sector economy and employment options for disabled persons in that sector.
- Alison Ward, Remploy Ltd., U.K. *Building Bridges through supported learning to learn processes into open employment*. Ms Ward gave an overview of Remploy, Ltd. as the largest provider of sheltered employment in the United Kingdom. She described the objectives of the project as introducing job coaching and thinking skills, the establishment of local job coach resources, and the support of individual programs. Emerging issues are work related skills and expectations, and social skills.
- Edwin de Vos, TNO Prevention & Health, The Netherlands. *Integration Initiatives*. TNO is the leading contract research organization in the Netherlands. He gave an overview of the rises in Dutch disability benefit

- claims over the past 30 years, the underlying causes, and what the Netherlands is doing to try and rectify the situation.
- Joseph Marrone. Institute for Community Inclusion, Boston, Massachusetts, USA. *Employment Outcomes For People With Serious Mental Illness*. Mr Marrone noted that employment outcomes for persons with mental illness are not affected by the labour market, and decried the 80 - 90% unemployment rates for this group. He noted that for organizational change to take place, there must be a combination of vision and external pressure.

At the close of this session, GLADNET Chair Dr. Aldred Neufeldt thanked all presenters.

GLADNET Association Business Meeting

The GLADNET Business meeting was held from 14h00 to 17h00 on Friday, May 26, 2000.

Motion to adopt agenda

Moved by Monroe Berkowitz, seconded by Brendan Sutton. Carried.

Motion to adopt the minutes of 1999 Annual General Meeting, ILO, Geneva

Moved by Monroe Berkowitz, seconded by Brendan Sutton. Carried.

Annual Report

The Chair provided an overview of the Annual Report. Mr Sziraczki clarified the structure of the ILO's disability program with reference to the Chair's comments that the disability agenda now is subsumed at a lower level of the ILO organization. This Chair indicated he would be pleased to change his comments.

Auditor's Report

Moved by Wingtai Chan (not present), seconded by Beverly Beckles. Adopted.

Report of the Nominating Committee & Election

The Nominating Committee, Brendan Sutton and Edwin de Vos, reported that three members of the Board whose terms were up, Monroe Berkowitz, Pierre Olivier and Lucy Wong-Hernandez, have agreed to stand for re-election. Mireille Dopchie, who has been representing Georges Rovillard on the Board, has agreed to stand as a candidate in her own right. Finally, Hiroshi Kawamura has agreed to be a candidate for election. Two members of the Board have resigned, Michael Kamp and Wingtai Chan. There being no other nominations, the nominating

committee report was accepted, and the new nine member Board has been acclaimed.

The members of the new Board are: Aldred H. Neufeldt, Mireille Dopchie, Monroe Berkowitz, Susanne Bruyère, Hiroshi Kawamura, Pierre Olivier, Lucy Wong-Hernandez, Edwin de Vos, Beverly Beckles.

Discussion of Knowledge Network Concept Paper

The Chair introduced and reviewed the Knowledge Network concept paper for discussion. There was a lively discussion. It was determined that there was general interest, but that more design work was needed, including an examination of the information resources, and a need to poll the user base as to its needs. In this regard, Roseangela said that the Inter-American Institute on Disability would be pleased to make a liaison with GLARP and other interested groups in Latin America. Also, both Monroe & Hiroshi will be at the Rehabilitation International Conference in Rio, where they will bring up the issue of the Knowledge Network.

A Knowledge Network Working Group was struck, composed of Thbault Lambert, Roseangela Berman-Bierler, Carl Raskin, Mireille Dopchie, Jacques Alastuey, Hiroshi Kawamura.

North-South Strategy

The Chair introduced and reviewed the concept paper, noting that both Rotary International and Goodwill Industries have encouraged us to proceed. He noted that organizations exist in both low and high income countries; that GLADNET could fulfill the role of creating partnerships. The first thing is to convene a planning conference, the issue being where, when, and how to fund such a conference.

In the ensuing discussion, Roseangela noted that the Inter- American Institute on Disability has the same approach, but targeting Latin America. At the RI Rio conference, she could introduce GLADNET's plans, if someone would agree to speak to them. Hiroshi felt that our employment focus might be a problem in some countries of the South, noting that income generation and independent living are also important issues, that we need to broaden our concept of employment beyond wage employment. The Chair concurred, noting that wage employment is often only a small part of the economic activity of persons with disabilities in many countries. Gyorgy Sziraczki questioned whether we were going too far in that GLADNET is research oriented, but what developing countries need is policy advice. Here, the Chair indicated he saw GLADNET being a mechanism to bring others to the table.

The next step in advancing the North - South Strategy is the GLADNET roundtable that takes place at the Geneva 2000 NGO Forum at the ILO June 28,

2000. The Chair and the Executive Director will meet with Canadian government officials to advance the idea of holding a planning meeting.

Other Business

10th Anniversary ADA Run

Charmaine Iversen from the US Department of State noted that there will be a run marking the 10th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ending at the United Nations in early August. The run is seen as a spring board for global accessibility. Would there be an interest in other countries? Stig Larsson said he will discuss this with Bengt Lindquist, and Charmaine Iversen said she will raise it with Jonathan Young. Here, it was indicated that this activity might be primarily seen to be of interest to the United States, albeit with the possibility of involving ambassadors from other countries.

Activities on the Occasion of the International Day

Peter Field indicated Canada is planning an event to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, December 3. He will inform GLADNET as things develop.

Support from Information Technology Companies

Roseangela indicated that IT companies are a natural source of support for an organization such as GLADNET. She suggested we begin exploring support from this quarter.

International Disability Alliance

Hiroshi indicates that an international disability alliance has been established with the view of proposing international treaties following the model of the Standard Rules. He proposes to share these initiative via GLADNET.

Casino Niagara Sector Conference

The Executive Director reported on the change of date of the Casino Niagara Sector conference to the Spring of 2001. He will keep GLADNET informed of developments.

Inclusion International World Conference

Brendan Sutton advises that the next Inclusion International World Conference will be in Melbourne, Australia in September 2002. He will provide information about the Conference to GLADNET. He also suggested that, perhaps, GLADNET might wish to hold its annual general meeting in conjunction with it.

Thanks to Susanne Bruyère

Monroe Berkowitz moved that there be a rousing of applause for Susanne Bruyère for organizing the conference.

Next Annual General Meeting of GLADNET

The next Annual General Meeting of GLADNET will take place in Tokyo, Japan in May 2001, hosted by Hiroshi Kawamura.

Close

There being no new business, the meeting closed at 15h44 hours on May 26, 2000.