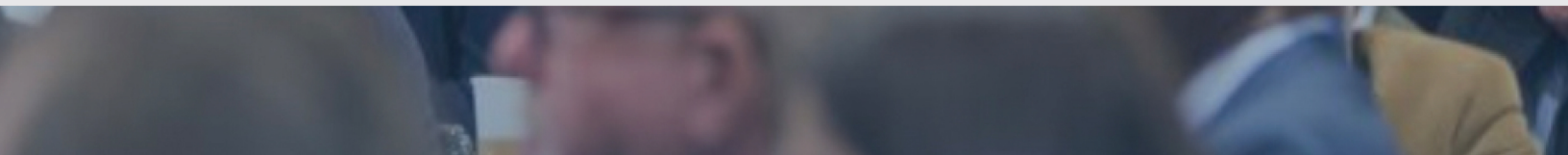


**HARKIN
SUMMIT**

**Harkin International
Disability Employment
Journal
2018**







Introduction Letter from Senator Harkin

Ruth and I are thankful for the progress leveraged through the Harkin International Disability Employment Summits, and we are proud of the work of our staff and editorial board to release the conference proceedings from the third Harkin Summit.

My charge to participants at each summit has been to challenge each other, to rethink what is possible, and to surface new approaches that can completely change the disability employment landscape globally. We have the attention of business leaders and governments, funders and civil society. We are gaining momentum from the first Summit until now, and we continue to grow and inspire other mini summits in other parts of the country, and globally.

Together we will continue to push the envelope, and find new ways, and new types of structures to make sure that businesses know that their bottom line will be better if they hire persons with disabilities. The progress for increasing employment of persons with disabilities is not inevitable. It's going to require dedicated individuals, to keep pushing forward and continue their tireless efforts. This is what we will continue to do with the Summits that we've started.

Last year I challenged participants at the Summit to dream big and give some thought to what it would take to double the labor participation for people with disabilities around the globe within the next ten years. I was inspired to set this audacious goal by leaders in the private sector like Randy Lewis, formally with Walgreen, and Microsoft, who have leveraged their personal and family experience with disability to help their companies step up and do things that have never been tried before.

Now I challenge every reader of this journal to do your part in helping to increase the labor participation for people with disabilities. As Hellen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."



Senator Tom Harkin (Retired)

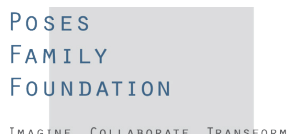
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A Letter from Harkin Institute Executive Director Joseph Jones

I am pleased to present to you the conference proceedings from the third annual Harkin International Disability Employment Summit in Washington, D.C. The inaugural summit was held two years ago and included 180 attendees from 30 countries. In total over the last three years we have hosted over 400 unduplicated participants from 47 countries, all focused on a commitment to increasing the rate of competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities.

We have made great strides over the past year and have seen some major leaps in terms of representation for people with disabilities in the

media and in advertising campaigns. Microsoft launched its Soundscape app that was developed to help people who are blind or with low vision to better anticipate their surroundings by reading from a 3-D map. Starbucks opened its first signing store in the United States just a few months ago in D.C., and every employee hired must be fluent in American Sign Language.

In the policy sphere, HRH Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan spearheaded the effort to pass comprehensive legislation protecting the rights of people with disabilities within Jordan. We are lucky to have such strong allies by our side who truly believe in the



A Letter from Harkin Institute Executive Director Joseph Jones

importance of inclusivity in the workplace and who value meaningful employment for people with disabilities.

Together, we must push and continue to innovate in order to produce the results that we desire around the world and across industries. This journal is an excellent example of how we, at The Harkin Institute, continue to create ways to stay in the conversation and push for more people with disabilities to be represented in the workforce through meaningful employment.

Participants in this summit were tasked with creating action plans with a goal of increasing the rate of competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities, focusing on five key areas: big ideas, helping workers thrive in a corporate setting, transforming livelihoods in the Global South, artificial intelligence and the workplace of the future, and closing the gender gap. You will find these action plans outlined throughout this document. It is the intent that participants in future summit's will continue to build on these conversations, both within our time together at the summit and through policies and practices developed in our organizations, governments, and other spheres of influence.

The Harkin International Disability Employment Summit as well as this conference proceedings would not be possible without Senator Tom Harkin (Retired). As many of you know, Senator Harkin served in the US Congress for forty years representing the state of Iowa, first in the House of Representatives and then in the Senate, and he was instrumental in passing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He has been a fierce advocate for people with disabilities throughout his life and his career. He didn't stop at the ADA either. He also helped to pass the Television Decoder Circuitry Act, the National Deafness and Other Communications Disorders Act, the

Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1991, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

Since retiring from the US Senate, Senator Harkin has stayed busy in establishing The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement in order to pursue research projects in areas of particular interest from his career as well as to host a variety of events to increase citizen engagement in their communities. Creating the Harkin Summit was Senator Harkin's dream when he first started developing The Harkin Institute and his plans for retirement.

The Harkin Institute is proud to release its first conference proceeding document in order to preserve and continue the discussion of increasing and improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities around the world.



Joseph Jones

Keynote

Celeste Warren

Vice President of Human Resources and
Global Diversity and Inclusion Center of
Excellence, Merck

I want to talk a little bit about foundationally before I get into the specifications around what we're trying to do. I say trying, because it is a journey from the standpoint of "we're not there yet." I don't think she's here, but I stand on the accomplishments and the work of my colleague and my mentor, Deb Daget. She was the previous officer at Merck, and I learned a lot from her as an HR leader within the organization while she was in her tenure as Chief Diversity Officer.

I don't want to give you the impression that Merck is at a utopian state. We're not. We learn every day. We learn from our successes and from our mistakes, and we still continue to grow in this area. But foundationally, our commitment as a company is to diversity inclusion. We want to make sure that we're affecting the mind, heart, and the body.

It's really important for us, as a health

pharmaceutical organization, that we understand the importance of inclusion of our diverse employees and our diverse patient population. It's not just abstract concepts. This is what I tell our leaders every day; this isn't a feel-good initiative; this is a business. I help them to understand why it's important and I'll talk about that.

I have a team, a small team within the Global Diversity and Inclusion Center of Excellence. We don't do all this work by ourselves, we can't do it all by ourselves. We have four of what I call my diversity ambassador teams. Four years ago, when I first stepped into the Chief Officer's role at Merck, the first team formed was our Employee Business Resource Group's Executive Leadership Council (EBRG). EBRG came together as a leadership team in providing insights and bringing the voice of their ten constituency groups and members to our forum to help us grow as an organization.



The second team is the Global Diversity and Inclusion Business Consortium, comprised of business leaders. They have to work through the lens of inclusion, people like our corporate responsibility representative, our marketing leaders, and our clinical operations leaders. They unsolicited called me when I first got the job four years ago and said: You know, Celeste, I'm struggling in the role that I do because I just need someone to understand the importance of having a diverse and -- fill in the blank -- employee.

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Celeste Warren

Vice President of Human Resources and
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Because of diverse patients through our clinical trials and diverse suppliers, we formed a third team to bring these populations together. We said: Let's push the ball together. And at some point, I firmly believe that we will not be there anymore if we keep plugging at it. Because if we don't get it, find human resources as HR practitioners and leaders, with what we offer around talent management, around talent acquisition, around learning and development, around compensation and benefits, around employment, legal, before it hurts our employee's cause then we have a problem. And so, this team basically looks at our HR, our people, practices, policies, and procedures through a lens of diversity and inclusion.

And then lastly, this is where I want to talk about our disability inclusion strategy. When I talk about the four diversity ambassador teams, people ask me: I get the other three, but why do you have something specifically on disability inclusion? When I first stepped into this role, Norah and some of the team members pulled me aside and talked about the work they had been doing in disability inclusion, but it was the ultimate ball pushing up a huge mountain.

And so, we asked, what are the challenges we face? And what are some of the things you think we should do? We did an assessment of our organization. We brought in someone to help us to do that, to look at every aspect – organizational structure, our facilities, our IT systems, our culture, and let us know, did it create an environment of inclusion? I said I wanted to know the ugly truth. Because if we don't really understand and have that candid conversation around what is not working, what we're doing well, then we'll never

get better.

We did the assessment, and we had the conversation, and brought together, for the first time in a long time, an integrated group of different disciplines across Merck to talk about our gaps. Our facilities management leader, employment, legal, learning and development, compensation and benefits, health and well-being, corporate responsibility, compliance, all came together. The first meeting was interesting walking in and them being in a room together. I was watching some of their faces. When they walked in, it became interesting and intriguing.

We wanted to create an integrated five-year strategy. Because we can't just do it because we need access, or because we're looking at talent acquisition or benefits. We have to have an integrated strategy for how we are moving this organization forward. I tell all of my colleagues, this is about change management, organizational change. If we don't apply the principles of organizational change and disability inclusion we're not going to get far.

There is methodology.

One: You have to understand what you're good at and what you're not good at. Once you understand that, then you can see how far the gap is and create strategies for how you close the gaps. We all need to work together because we all need to be seeing it on the same page. So when we went and asked for additional dollars, it wasn't just from the facilities or IT leader or compliance leader, but backed by an intelligent business case for why we need to do this.

So, we focused on culture, leadership, and access.

Keynote

Celeste Warren

Vice President of Human Resources and
Global Diversity and Inclusion Center of
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Merck is in 140 different countries. This was not a small task of doing this assessment. Frankly, it wasn't easy for our leaders to hear either. No one wants to hear that their child is ugly. But, we wanted to make sure that the leaders were hearing what it was that they needed to work on. Employment practices was something we knew we needed to focus on: talent acquisition, how we were recruiting, benefits, how we were making sure we have coverage for all our employees, learning and development.

We also focused on community outreach because we can't do it alone. We need external partners and supplier diversity. A big part of this puzzle and partnership was with the Employee Business Resource Groups; we have ten. Our Disability Employee Resource Group played a very strong role. When we started out it had been in existence for ten years. When they formed their focus was primarily on employees who were

parents of children with disabilities. We had done some wonderful things in that area not just as a support group, but putting in place some things to support our employees. When I stepped into the role, I asked the EBRG leader at the time: What are we doing for our own employees who have disabilities? As the diversity group matured, we still stayed focus around the parents, but also evolved the talent in the network and around helping our global talent configuration group bring in more of their constituency group and using their voice to bring in business insights.

The leader of this group was invited to join the Disability Inclusion Strategy Council. That was something important in our organization. Through that participation, the EBRG rebranded itself as the Merck Capability Network. Their voice - what they were able to do in helping us and moving and evolving the council and our initiatives forward - was invaluable because we got direct insight into what we should be doing.

One of the things I tell leaders across Merck, especially in the marketing areas, is that it's not enough to interpret what you think a person of color might feel in the Diabetes franchise, or it's not enough to interpret what you think someone's going through in a different country. Have that person on your team so they can help you as you design and build your business strategies. Because a group of homogenous individuals sitting on a team can't interpret what it feels like for others. And so, you have to have a diverse team as you put these strategies together.

Through that leadership model we have learned a lot. The disability representation helped us to bring in business insights and really hone in on. It helped us to understand what we should be

**“If we don't apply
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focusing on and how to go about closing the gap in what we're seeing around digital accessibility, facility assessments, social media branding, and recruitment. We had some great examples in that space.

I want to unpack just a minute around disability inclusion. I've seen many, many different definitions of disability inclusion and how we should go about it, but this one rang true to me and what we're trying to do at Merck: "Understanding the relationship between the way people function and how they participate in society and making sure that everybody has the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of

intellectually-minded company. We have a noble mission and we want to save and improve lives. We are an organization full of very intellectually relevant individuals, scientists, engineers, and

marketing and sales professionals. Data plays a big key in how we approach our business. And so likewise, in order to talk to our leaders, data plays an important role. We're so thankful for the Disability Equality Index because that index helped us to really think about where we should focus at Merck in this area. We assess and measure how we're doing.

Every two years, our employees participate in

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"Disability representation helped us to bring in business insights and really hone in on. It helped us to understand what we should be focusing on and how to go about closing the gap in what we're seeing around digital accessibility, facility assessments, social media branding, and recruitment."

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their abilities and desires." That's a mouthful, but it means so much.

I would like to talk about what that means to us at Merck - understanding the relationship. We have to do a better job in understanding the relationship of those with disabilities in our corporations. One of the ways we approach this at Merck is through assessment, measurement, and research. We always say at Merck it's an

an opinion survey called the advice survey. It provides us with feedback on how we're doing across different parameters around engagement and empowerment in our workforce. We leverage that information to understand, specifically our employees with disabilities, how they are feeling. So instead of just getting all of the information and looking at it the same across a variety of different primary and secondary mentions of diversity, we

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really focus on looking at those employees with disabilities to find out what they're saying to us in all of those different parameters. Then, we take action to try to bring a close to those gaps where we see issues.

As it pertains to the Disability Equality Index or DEI, our goal this year was to receive a one hundred percent score. I'm competitive.



Because it was the right thing to do, we have been working on our disability inclusion strategy at this time for two and a half years. We had made significant progress from where we were, but we wanted to make sure we were looking at that time in the right way. Having an outside assessment was important to us, because we can all assess what's happening in our own houses and say it's good. Having someone from the outside really go through it and tell us what we're doing well or not really helped us. We had been intentional in prioritizing the gaps and developing remediation plans. We're proud that we were able to get a one hundred percent score in the DEI this year. We were doing cartwheels through the halls.

The second part of the definition is that they participate in society. The Merck Capability Network mentioned the New Jersey and Pennsylvania locations. They identified opportunities to provide scholarships and disability internships that have a positive impact on both the community and our company's future labor force. We worked directly with people with disabilities. It was such a pleasure to hear what their challenges were and learn from them on how to improve and attract them as a labor force.

We knew also that being in 140 different countries meant that we couldn't do this from just our global headquarters in Kenilworth, New Jersey. The issues that exist in each of those countries is different. What we were seeing in a lot of the government structures is that they were bearing the cost for any type of disability inclusion efforts onto the corporation. What we were starting to see is that the governments

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have to manage budgets, so they were putting a lot of the challenge and some of that responsibility back onto the multinational companies.

We have started to see in many different countries in which we do business laws and regulations around percentage of persons with disabilities that should be employed in the company in that country. We knew that we don't want to just employ people because it was the letter of the law, it was the spirit of the law that was

important. We knew that we wanted an inclusive culture for our persons with disabilities across the globe. Our partnership with the International Labor Organization is a critical one for us. We're going to learn from the ILO and to learn across the business landscape what we can do to really have a world where disability inclusion is important.

In the United States it is very, very critical that we understand what's happening across our



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local and our federal and state governments. Our team is getting together with our Global Government Affairs Organization and United States Government Affairs Organization and talking about things we can do to impact policy. It is critical that we keep with that fight to ensure everyone has the same opportunities

In this area, we want to focus on recruitment, development, advancement, and retention. We want disability inclusion from recruiting staffing organizations and in direct hiring. All the different agencies we contract with, what are their principles around disability inclusion? Do they have the same values that we have at Merck? Also important to us is supplier diversity and engagement with certified disability supplier. We want to create that economic well-being in the world.

We have also expanded our outreach at the university level. We found our university relations organization were going to the colleges, but what were they on students with disabilities? Were they talking to them on the college campuses? So we expanded the outreach and became more sophisticated in those sourcing strategies. We designed disability mentoring days for college-level students that resulted in a third of the students being considered for summer internships within our organization. Next year, we're hosting a leadership development day for students in the disability conference to help them understand STEM-related opportunities within the organization.

Additionally, we have looked at applicant flow from the standpoint of an individual bringing or sending a resume to us, through the assessment of the

resume, to the phone screens by the recruiters, to bringing in the candidates for interviews, to the selection process. We want to make sure we're tracking applicant hires, and we want to find out what's happening as we go through the process. We want to discover what's happening when they're falling off and attack that. Because that's an organizational pain point. We want to make sure we're attacking those pain points and what helps us is understanding the data so everyone has the same opportunities, everyone.

Finally, we want to make sure that everyone has the ability to do their best, based on their abilities and desires. The way that you can attack this, the way we have, is through leadership and accountability.

Many of us, all of us, have biases that we deal with. Leaders are no exception; the only difference is that leaders and managers are making decisions about people. What jobs are they going to do? Will they get a job? What projects will they work on? Are they promoted or not? That's when those biases start to play. We start to hear things in the rooms when they're making these people decisions. We have to challenge them. We have to challenge them when they're scrutinizing the female candidates and the male. We have to challenge them when they're cruising the candidates of color or with disabilities. We have to challenge those biases and assumptions that they're making. We have to make sure that our leaders are being inclusive leaders exhibiting and demonstrating inclusive behaviors because that's how you create an inclusive culture within an organization.

Culture is not a nebulous thing. You attack it

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through people, processes, and systems - very tangible things. With our leaders, we have to make sure that they're educated on inclusive behaviors. We had a seven-month program where we drilled down to the importance of innovation. Then we talked about who brings those points-of-view, and we talked about all of us. It really helped to understand. If you're talking about the importance of digital in our business, what do you think those individuals that would have that capability look like? They don't look like all of you. So, how are we making sure that we are creating the workforce that we need for our business, today?

Leadership plays a very important role. We do want to make sure that we're focusing on that. We call managers in our organization our layer of clay because they're the ones taking the strategy and vision of our leaders, shaping it, operationalizing it, and interpreting it to their employees. They also have to take the feelings and ideas from their employees, shape them and send them upward. It's not an easy job. But managers are critical for creating an inclusive environment, so we work with our development leaders to make sure that all of the manager training that is mandatory or for our leaders integrates disability inclusion into the training offerings.

What is it we can do? I'll close with some of my thoughts on this. We have to keep building our skills and capabilities, all of us. Stay relevant and understand where the business landscape is going and what capabilities you need to be able to do that. Also, as leaders, we need to make sure that we are building our capabilities around diversity inclusion and how to create those inclusive cultures. Finally, the importance

of being a mentor and being an advocate in this space is critical, extremely critical. We have to constantly teach and educate; we have to be mentors for our colleagues and help them to succeed. Wrap your arms around others to ensure that they can get into the organizations, and they can be successful.

I was talking to a leader recently. He told me that he doesn't know if persons with disabilities can do his job. I said, "What are you doing? You're not working on a line, it's an office." What's the problem? Well... that's where I told you that bias comes in. Do you understand what it takes for persons with disabilities when they come in to a workplace? Minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, their mind works constantly, consistently, on how to get through and do what they need to do. That's constantly. That skill set of adaptability, of ingenuity, of innovation, of troubleshooting, of looking at a situation and saying - okay, how do I solve this issue? Those skills are needed in our workforce today. People with disabilities can do it better than any able-bodied person, so how is it that you have a bias in your head that your jobs may not fit? Constantly have that conversation with our leaders and those in positions of power to educate and push. It's not easy, but we have to keep fighting.

We have to be those advocates in the government, across the corporations and the NGOs, and in the institutions, in our communities; we have to fight. Why is this important? Because our children need us. It's very important that we understand the future is theirs. We are forging that path for them. With that, I thank you for indulging me for this time. ■

Keynote

Rasha Kashan

Editor, BBC Arabic

Hello everyone.

Just to put you in the picture of what to expect from this keynote, I will be introducing myself, talking a bit about my childhood, disability and education. I will talk a bit more about my experience with job hunting, then employment with the BBC, where the BBC stands from disability, and the development scheme I am leading at present. I could improvise, but I set myself a challenge. I will be trying something that I haven't done for 7 years, since I lost my sight. I will be using a new technique for the first time with the assistance of my screen reader. I am plugging some headphones on my ears to follow the script and my colleague and assistant Khulood will be presenting some slides on another screen as I speak. If this works, that means I will definitely consider getting back to presenting programs. If not, please bear with me, as I will be a bit slow, and blame technology for any mistake!

My name is Rasha Kashan - "Rasha" means a baby deer in Arabic. I feel really privileged to stand before you all today and share my personal journey with you. I am the Editor of Diversity and Development at BBC Arabic in London and I was the first female Sudanese journalist to join the service. I also happen to be blind and a mum raising my 12-year old son on my own. The word "impossible" is not in my vocabulary but the word "challenge" is. Like many of you in the room, my biggest challenge is not accepting my disability but trying to change other people's perceptions of it. I remember the late Stephen Hawking talking about his disability and saying that it was important: "not to be disabled in spirit as well as physically". That is indeed how I have tried to live my life.



I was born in Oxford in England to a father who travelled all the way from Sudan to train as a surgeon in the home of orthopedics. I was the second child of three siblings. At the time of my birth, my dad was counting the days until he could return home and serve his country. My mum is an artist. She set up a little gallery in our home, and sacrificed her career to raise my two brothers, sister and me. I grew up in Sudan, lived an exceptional childhood, and travelled with my family from the far west to the far east of the country. I was famous for being the only four-year old girl to wear glasses from such an early age. I still vividly remember my first trip to the opticians – my mum looked at me and said: "Rasha, you have such beautiful eyes. We need to frame them." Those words touched me at the time and continue to touch me now.

I attended a state-run primary school. It was only when I was a teenager that I learned more about the reality of my progressive condition. I was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa, a form of Retina Dystrophy that causes the light photo

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Rasha Kashan

Editor, BBC Arabic

receptors to die, leaving a black pigment, on the back of the eye. I overheard my mum answering a neighbor's question about my condition. I was shocked to hear that it wasn't going to get better. I remember the gut-wrenching disappointment I felt when I realized I would never be able to ride my bike again, as I was hoping, and, gradually I would lose my sight, until I became totally blind.

At the age of 18, I decided to go to university to read journalism, but at the time political tensions were running high in Sudan and this was disrupting tertiary education institutions. I desperately wanted to study in the UK, but my

Dad was concerned that I might not be able to cope in a strange environment, as my vision had started to deteriorate rapidly at that point. So, we reached a compromise – I would complete my first degree in Sudan and then move to the UK for my postgraduate studies. In fact, I ended up studying at three different universities in Sudan at the same time. This was for pragmatic reasons - the security forces kept shutting universities down one after another and I needed to get a degree as quickly as possible and leave for the UK. In the end, I graduated from two universities with two different degrees, one in Journalism and the other in Mass Communications - I came top



Keynote

Rasha Kashan

Editor, BBC Arabic

in my year in both.

In 1996, I travelled to the UK and began a new chapter in my life. On my way to London, I stopped off in Cairo and received the prestigious Ali & Mustafa Amin Award of Excellence for the top Arabic speaking graduates of Journalism. Once in London I had a very clear idea of what I wanted to do next - to learn to live independently, perfect my English, acquire IT skills, get an MA, gain some practical journalism experience and ultimately join the BBC Arabic Service. I learned how to use a white cane for the first time in my life and immediately recognized how many doors it opened for me in the UK, compared to the ones it closed back home. I completed touch typing and computing courses and two MAs – one in Broadcast Journalism and one in Bilingual Translation.

My greatest fear was that I would turn up for a job interview and the panel wouldn't recognize my journalistic skills and only see my disability. Unfortunately, my fears became a reality. Every time I applied for a job I immediately got shortlisted and invited to an interview. But the minute I walked into the board room with my white cane, I didn't get the job. Of course, no one ever told me that it was because of my disability, because they were only too aware they would have been sued. But it really knocked my confidence at the time and made me feel

incredibly frustrated. My message to employers was always the same - give me a chance, make a few minor adjustments to my working environment and I will be an asset to your organization.

Finally, after a lot of rejection and disappointments, I found an employer which recognized my journalistic credentials and for whom my disability became almost invisible – the BBC. I am sure most people in this room are very familiar with

the BBC but just in case you aren't – it's the public service broadcaster in the UK, which is funded by a license fee. Its services include 9 national TV channels, 10 national radio stations, 40 local radio stations, an extensive website, and increasing digital services. The BBC World Service broadcasts in 40 languages including Arabic. The BBC's mission is to enrich people's lives with programs and services that inform, educate and entertain, and its vision is to be the most creative organization

“Anyway, after not being successful on two occasions, I discovered that the BBC would actually allow me to do the test electronically rather than write it by hand and they would give me more time because of my disability. I just needed to ask. That made all the difference, and I finally got through to the interview stage.”

in the world.

Anyway, after not being successful on two occasions, I discovered that the BBC would actually allow me to do the test electronically rather than write it by hand and they would give me more time because of my disability. I just needed to ask. That made all the difference, and I finally got through to the interview stage. I still remember the moment I got a call from the BBC, inviting me for an interview. It was incredibly

Keynote

Rasha Kashan

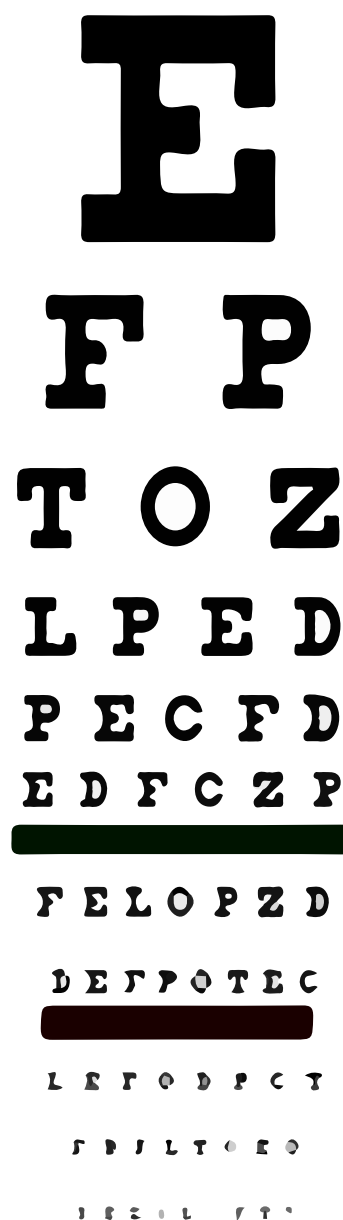
Editor, BBC Arabic

exciting. “Yes” I said to myself - this was my opportunity to shine and impress.

I walked into the room arm in arm with the recruitment officer, who then helped me to get seated. The 3-member panel welcomed me, introduced themselves, and started asking questions. Everything was fine until I moved to the last part of the interview, and I was presented with a script and asked to read it as if I were in a studio. I freaked out, and then tried to control my emotions. Before the interview I had been assured that no written material would be part of the interview. The head of the panel immediately apologized. There was a brief silence as I looked at the text and realized that it was actually in a large bold font. A little voice inside me told me to just read it. I visualized myself in a BBC studio presenting a program to the BBC Arabic audience, and just got on with the job. Six months later I was in the hot-seat doing just that for real, co-presenting a new flagship BBC Arabic program, for millions of our younger listeners.

My experience with the BBC was different from any other employer. It enabled me to celebrate being a journalist, and colleagues have almost treated me like a VIP. It not only removed the minor practical barriers that were holding me back, it took away major psychological obstacles, restored my confidence and allowed me to focus on what I am good at - my journalism.

I was the first journalist with severe visual impairment to join BBC Arabic. As soon as I started, I had a needs assessment done by the BBC Access Services. It covered all aspects of my working life from mobility to building safety but the most significant part was assistive technology. Since starting at the BBC fourteen years ago, I have literally been introduced to dozens of systems and applications, not only because the



BBC has changed what it uses, but also due to the progress of my condition. This has been daunting at times, but I have just accepted the fact that “it is what it is.” I have gained strength from the fact that I have a great support network around me, with direct access to the top managers of each section. I have never been put under pressure to do a job in a certain way or use tools I feel uncomfortable with.

People with a disability in the UK are also fortunate because there is a governmental scheme called Access to Work. It assesses the needs of

employees with disabilities and provides funding for equipment, travel to work and support workers as required. So, I now have a full-time personal assistant, who even travels with me abroad, and cars to take me to work and vice versa.

Keynote

Rasha Kashan

Editor, BBC Arabic

“My idea was to launch a new scheme for journalists with disabilities, initially from the Arabic-speaking world, but I then wanted to roll it out to all the other forty language services. To my amazement and delight I was selected to be one of the thirty future leaders to take part in an intensive one-year development program, and I even had a small budget to help me during the planning phase of AimHigh”

During the first two years of my career with BBC Arabic I worked as a presenter, reporter, program maker and producer, and in my third year I was made a senior journalist. Three years after, I was appointed Editor, an achievement which to this day I feel very proud of, especially as it happened at the time I had additional work and personal challenges in my life. Unfortunately though I was no longer able to present, because of a new advanced computing system adopted by the BBC then. This was a huge disappointment for me.

Around the same time my vision rapidly deteriorated, and I went back to my eye consultant. The last time I had a sight test I was able to see up to the fifth row of the chart. I could only see the two top rows. The doctor tried every lighting adjustment in the room, but nothing worked. My Retina Dystrophy had advanced like an intruder. Even though I knew that the day would eventually come, I had been living in denial up until then. How could I cope with looking after my five-year old son, if I was blind? Would I need to learn braille? I was also filing for a divorce and moving homes at the time; suddenly, I lost all my comfort zones at once – both at home and at work. But being the pragmatist that I am, I just knew that I had to

keep moving forward. I was very lucky that the BBC supported me every step of the way. I was also fortunate to have a live-in nanny at home so that my son and I could establish a new routine.

I will tell you a little story. Around the time that I was first appointed program editor my boss enrolled me in a coaching program! I started to communicate with my new coach via email. I sent him my CV and job description but didn't mention anything else. Then, the day of our first coaching session arrived. I walked into the room and said “Hi, I am Rasha.” Silence. He then said “Are you really? Sorry, I didn't realize....” I smiled and said: “Realize what? That I am visually impaired”? He said “Yes, and that you are a woman and that you are of a black origin.” I added “and a single mum, and filing for divorce, and a Muslim!” We both laughed and he said: “you certainly tick all of our diversity boxes, Rasha!” This was the first time I realized that being a bit different is actually something to celebrate. That coaching experience made me even more curious about diversity at the BBC.

So, in 2016, I applied for a new Leadership Development Program that the BBC launched in order to identify the top future leaders in the

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Rasha Kashan

Editor, BBC Arabic

organization. My idea was to launch a new scheme for journalists with disabilities, initially from the Arabic-speaking world, but I then wanted to roll it out to all the other forty language services. To my amazement and delight I was selected to be one of the thirty future leaders to take part in an intensive one-year development program, and I even had a small budget to help me during the planning phase of AimHigh -- the name I chose for my scheme. It was the first disability scheme for BBC journalists outside the UK, and the first of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa. More than 300 people applied, and ten successful candidates were invited to travel from Algeria, Western Sahara, Sudan, Egypt, Yemen and Iraq to do it. The training program included sessions in essential BBC editorial and practical modules. It is one of my proudest achievements -- utilizing my own personal experience to empower others.

Let's have a quick look at where the BBC stands when it comes to disability. The BBC has always

had a commitment to reflect and represent the diversity of the population. Our aim is to be the most diverse and representative media organization in the world. Just before I left London to come to this summit the BBC's Director General Tony Hall published the organization's final report into culture and career progression at the BBC -- focusing on its ambitions for disabled staff. The report came up with a series of recommendations which will change the way we work. Tony Hall said "We want to open up opportunities, so there will be new disability targets, helping us do just that. We are appointing a new Disability Lead and encouraging more disabled role models so you will see more prominent champions at all levels, and especially in leadership roles."

Now for a few stats: in the UK, there are currently 13.3 million disabled people. That's 1 in 5 people. 18% of working age adults are disabled. So how is the BBC doing? Around 21,000 people work for the BBC.



Globally more work needs to be done to address discrimination. Although I am very lucky with my work environment, I am no stranger to discrimination. A couple of weeks ago I was in Dubai for a short holiday with my son Ziyad. At the airport he said to me innocently: "Look Mummy, they have mistranslated the sign. Instead of people with disabilities it says people of determination". I was aware that the government of the UAE had recently decided to use more positive language to describe people

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Senator Harkin, in the last Summit you said you wanted to see the figures of disabled employees doubled. Four years ago, we had 3.7% staff with disabilities. Two years later they increased to 5.3%. Today, over 2,000 people at the BBC have a disability - that's around 10.4% of our workforce. Out of this number around 9.5% are in leadership positions, almost triple the number four years ago. And this is not good enough for us, the new target announced last week is 12%. We aspire to keep going until we match the population figure of 18% very soon. This, in my view, is what makes the BBC stand out as an employer.

with disabilities. I explained this to my son. The next day we went to the bank with a friend and he saw blatant discrimination. I made a point of using my white cane, even though I was with a friend. The cashier printed out some forms and asked my friend: "What is her name"? It was as if I didn't exist. My son was the quickest to notice this. "What ?!" Ziyad exclaimed. The cashier ignored him and continued talking to my friend: "Surely she doesn't work so no need to worry about the other form". By this time, I was feeling frustrated. I stopped him by saying "Sorry, it's me who has this bank account not my friend, you need to speak to me. And, why did you assume I didn't work? Because I can't see? Blind people can hear and understand as well as talk". When we walked out of the bank my son was very despondent and said "What's the point of calling the disabled people "people of determination" then? It obviously doesn't mean anything." For me, our experience in that bank in Dubai illustrates that ignorance still exists and we need to tackle these discriminatory attitudes at a grassroots level.

Closer to home, there was recently outrage from some BBC viewers in the UK when a young TV presenter appeared on children TV without wearing her prosthetic arm. Some parents found this offensive and were worried that it would shock their children. I believe that we need to build a culture that respects differences and treats disability with dignity and understanding.

On an employment level, people with disabilities are not sitting there waiting for someone to do them a favor by employing them. We are extremely talented, incredibly reliable and, of all other employees, we are the ones who are willing to go the extra mile to show dedication and

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commitment. I believe that our AimHigh trainees, who are from developing countries, deserve the right to an education and work, but more than that they deserve to live in a world without prejudice. For example, my blind trainee Ahmed in Cairo needs to have adapted traffic lights that will enable him to cross the road independently so that he doesn't need to pay someone to help him cross the road. Haidar in Baghdad has the right to have his own bank account and credit card, both of which he has been denied because he can't see. Ramadan, a postgraduate researcher, should be offered the job he deserves. Currently he is asked to stay at home and is being paid a salary of less than \$20 a month so that his employer can meet his mandatory disability quota. Sidi Mohammed in Algeria should be able to vote in the elections in a way that is accessible to him. Nahla should be able to marry the man she loves. At the moment, her family is concerned she is prone to abuse psychologically and her husband may

control her finances, because of her disability. Elghali in Western Sahara needs to find the job that matches his incredible skills and not to feel obliged to carry on with the marginal work he is doing at the moment. And finally, Waleed needs to be introduced as a presenter, not as a blind presenter.

Ladies and gentlemen, when all of my colleagues from AimHigh have achieved this maybe I can retire. As a journalist I am not that comfortable being the story myself, instead I prefer telling other people's stories. But if it can help change perceptions about disability and confront prejudices then it has been worthwhile. I consider myself to be very lucky – I have had so many opportunities in life, perhaps even more so because of my disability. I dream of a day when it becomes the norm to see journalists with disabilities on our TV screens, not just in the UK, as is the case now, but around the world. Thank you for listening. ■

Keynote

Bill DeBlasio

Mayor of New York City

Senator Harkin, I am so appreciative for this summit, and really much more appreciative for everything you have done. Tom Harkin, the greatest champion in American history for people with disabilities, and anyone — anywhere — who likes the phrase ‘progressive,’ and wants to call themselves a progressive, should make themselves in the example of Tom Harkin.

Senator Harkin has mentioned my colleague Victor Calise. I imagine a lot of you here know Victor to be a man of extraordinary energy and relentless desire to make change. A lot of the the reason why New York City is the vanguard of

change and progress on behalf of people with disabilities, is Victor Calise. Please give him a round of applause.

Senator Harkin mentioned New York City at Work and was so proud of it. He talked about it very briefly, but I want to give credit to some of the folks in the room there who represent organizations that have helped us in providing resources and supports to make it actually happen. I want to thank the Kessler Foundation, Nielsen Foundation, the Institute for Career Development and New York State Access, VR. Thank you all; you’ve been extraordinary.



Keynote

Bill DeBlasio

Mayor of New York City

Look, here's the bottom line, I want to fold this point into a straightforward vision: What do we all want in our lives and society? We want fairness. I think it's a really extraordinary, real American value of fairness. If you feel like the rules of the game are fair, all giving us the same chance, people feel a sense of gratitude and comfort. If they think the game is rigged, Americans don't take well to that. We said we're going to use this opportunity as a present administration to do something different.

We're setting goals for ourselves in the next four years to be the fairest big city in America - fairness in every policy. And everyone in the room knows there's an area where there has been historic unfairness, and a need to make a fairness doctrine the core of what we do. It is people with disabilities and really granting them the opportunity to live their fullest life they deserve. We believe that extends to many areas, but especially we believe that a lot more needs to be done on employment. But we also said you know what, we have to take stock in not being afraid to look at what is working, what's not working, what's on

schedule and behind schedule to look at the level of accessibility across the board for folks with disabilities. So, we have. We're very proud of creating a baseline for everything else called Accessibility NYC. We also have to be honest, so everyone can be held accountable. We try to

do that, and that has given us a platform of specific changes I want to mention to you, and Victor is going to be at the forefront.

One is when it comes to transit. New York taxis are iconic, but everyone also knows they're inaccessible. We need to create clear standards for our taxis and provide sharing services as well. They have to put thousands of accessible vehicles on the road. That's a mandate, and it is nonnegotiable; it has to happen. We're proud of that fact. From now on, all the ferries are accessible. We're sending the message that we want to do it right and in a way that really engages.

The second is the area of education; this was tough. Because we need to be serving those who have disabilities, but here's the kicker: we have 1,800 schools and a lot of school buildings now fifty years old or seventy-five years old. We have a number of

“Some of the people, who have the desire and the talent, have so much to contribute, and we want to give them the opportunity. You can't watch that happen. The government can't just fight discrimination. We have to be active, proactive, in addressing the situation.”

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school buildings over one hundred years old. We have to do better at accessibility. It will take billions, a vast amount of money, to make right those schools, and a third of the buildings must be fully accessible in the near term. Of course, all thanks to Tom Harkin. All of the new buildings are accessible. We're going to go much farther and literally spend billions to do it because it's the right thing to do.

The third we already mentioned. Four is employment - where the rubber hits the road. Some of the people, who have the desire and the talent, have so much to contribute, and we want to give them the opportunity. You can't watch that happen. The government can't just fight discrimination. We have to be active, proactive, in addressing the situation. So that's where NYC At Work looks at; it's a public-private partnership and pretty straightforward.

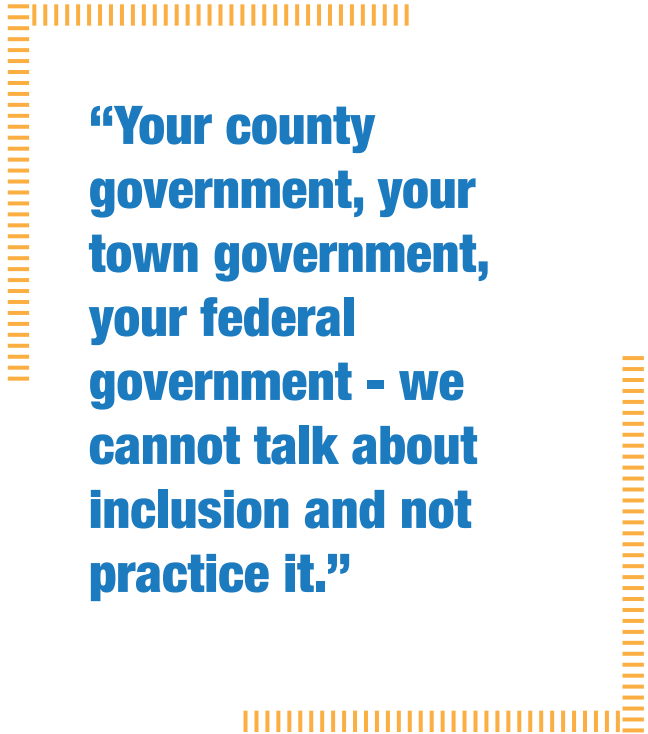
We need you to be committed as companies. We need to know that you're going to take responsibility to really be fair employers. We've got major companies in New York City signed up. We started with about 1,200 job seekers, folks with disabilities, working together to fill jobs. It's good progress; over 150 New Yorkers have been hired, and I'm happy to say 60 of them have been hired by city government. And I think this is a crucial point; everyone in this room should really push hard - again, not preaching to the choir, but I have to say it, your county government, your town government, your federal government - we cannot talk about inclusion and not practice it.

Development of jobs is the area where we see immediate progress, and we are pleased. I'll just give you three stories because we all know it makes it real and personal, and actually what it means for human beings to get the job.

One, Travis who had bipolar disorder, and because of that, he couldn't get a full-time job. We worked with him, and connected him to a clothing store on Fifth Avenue in the center of New York City. Because of that, he got a job and has now been promoted to full-time with full benefits.

And another example, Crystal, has a lot of problems, and she's in a wheelchair. She wanted a better job. The City of New York, as I said, saw the talent that Crystal brought. In the process she more than doubled her salary. Now she has enough money to move into a larger apartment with her fiancé. Again, life-changing.

Last example, very powerful and poignant, Tracy, she lost her leg to cancer. As a result of that tragedy her career also was derailed, because of a health crisis that ultimately left to unemployment.



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We helped her at NYC At Work get a job in guest services at the Museum for the City of New York. It wasn't just that she got a job. When she got there, she became a high-impact person in terms of influencing all the rest of the staff to think about how accessibility and inclusion has changed the approach and culture of the entire museum and therefore has helped a lot of people.

These are powerful stories, but there's so many more and so many more that you can help to create where you come from. We all have to feel this very simple notion: Every time we reach one more person, we are making a huge change in somebody's life and also creating bigger change. I'll just conclude with this: Thank you, everyone. I know we've had a very productive couple of days. Thank you for all you do. It's hard work, but it's making a difference, and there is a lesson that Tom Harkin, who started the ball rolling with

the passage of the ADA, continues, like the great leader he is, to fight for the next thing and the next thing and the next thing. He never saw the passage of the ADA as an end point, but as a beginning point. We have to live the same today. When he was at a signing ceremony, he said: Today, this opens the doors to all Americans with disabilities.

And he's right. The doors are open. We have to keep opening them and open them wider, and there's some doors that have not been open enough. That's where you all come in. I thank you for all you do. I want to send you back home with all the respect and appreciation and energy in the world. A lot can change here. We just have to be bold enough to demand and believe in it. We can all get a lot done.

Thanks everyone and bless you for all you're doing. ■

Keynote

HRH Prince Mired bin Ra'ad Zeid Al- Hussein

President, Higher Council for the Rights
of Persons with Disabilities Jordan



Senator Tom Harkin,

Mr. Joseph Jones, Executive Director
of The Harkin Institute,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

My colleagues and I sadly missed last year's Harkin Summit due to some unavoidable circumstance. So, this year we made a big effort to be here with you and we are so delighted that we made it. Your dream to create this summit Senator Harkin is truly remarkable, as you have allowed people to congregate here in DC from all over the world to share their experiences and to network for the sake of persons with disabilities and their inalienable right to seek employment. We are, Senator Harkin, forever in your debt, because it is at conferences like this one that new ideas emerge, bonds are forged and magic happens.

Ever since I knew that I would be speaking to you here today, I have been contemplating what I could possibly say to you, experts from all over the world, that you haven't heard already! Not an easy challenge... that's for sure!! I will attempt to tell you a little bit about the uphill struggle that we are facing in Jordan that is, in all honesty, not too dissimilar to the struggles of other developing

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countries, and how we are hoping to reach the top. The problems and challenges that we face in my part of the world are rather different in size and scope to what you face here in the United States, although many issues do transcend the world over.

First of all I would like to paint for you a quick backdrop of my neck of the woods so that you may understand the context of what we are dealing with. The Middle East, or rather the 'Muddled East' I should say, is one of the regions of the world that has witnessed phenomenal tragedy and destruction over many decades. The wars, both regional and civil, the proxy wars, the wars of attrition, the internal conflicts, the revolutions, the coup d'états, the uprisings, the religious conflicts, the ideological divides, the land-grabs, the fight for natural resources, the desire for hegemony, colonialism, spheres of influence, the distrust between nations, the meddling and interference in the affairs of others, the lack of good governance and leadership, and the general balance of power all contributed to the fragile state that is the Middle East. This is the backdrop of our lives and the overarching architecture of the region that we live in and that we have to build upon to survive and to somehow prosper! This being said my country Jordan, and I am sure those of you who have visited will attest, is like a little island of stability amidst a very turbulent sea. And we have had to endure the endless turmoil of the region.

I imagine some of you may now be wondering - with all the issues that I just mentioned how is it that Jordan has made disability rights such a priority, and that we (my colleagues and I) are

even here attending this distinguished summit? The simple answer is that we took a decision a long time ago to look beyond the madness and upheaval that has plagued the region and commit ourselves to the issue of disability and disability rights and forge ahead. And since then, since that fateful moment, we haven't looked back! It has become a niche area. I am not saying by any stretch of imagination that things are perfect for persons with disabilities in Jordan. No not at all, not by a mile. But what I am saying is that, with the little that we have, we have always endeavored to punch above our weight.

In general, and in comparison to other Arab countries, I would venture to say that we are leading the charge on disability and have been for a long time. We have numerous NGOs that have worked for decades in this space. Our universities have churned out thousands of talented and qualified people who have managed these organizations—both at home and throughout the region—and persons with disabilities in Jordan have been on the frontlines demanding new disability legislation that was finally realized last year. Where we have fallen short however, and in some areas dramatically, has been on the public policy side of things - strategizing for disability at the macro level and delivering services to persons with disabilities nationwide. So, in short, compared to our neighbors, we are doing well but in reality, and in truth for us that 'doesn't cut the mustard.' Our hopes and aspirations are way more ambitious.

Now vis-à-vis employment - we truly believe that the 'right to work' is an inalienable right for all, and by all I mean all people. The right to work is

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a 'human right'. That which allows for and paves the way for individual autonomy, the right to live independently. It enhances social inclusion and freedom of choice, etcetera, etcetera. We know all of this to be true. Yet in my country, like in the majority of developing countries, there are numerous barriers that prevent and hinder persons with disabilities from finding employment. The main overarching issue being the stereotypical portrayal of persons with disabilities as a 'medical case', someone who is sick or unfit or incapable of work because of his or her disability. In short, someone who needs fixing! They are therefore shunned by the labor market and discriminated against because of their disability.

At the core, the problem lies with our Ministry of Education that has yet not taken on its full responsibility of educating children with disabilities in Jordan. This solemn duty was never fulfilled and as a result the vast majority of children with disabilities have not been properly educated or educated on par with children without disabilities. This of course has had a knock on effect over the years that has resulted in the accumulation of a very high percentage of people with disabilities who are illiterate, uneducated, without skills or experience and, in most cases unemployable. This unfortunately is a massive problem for most countries in the developing world, not only for my country. The question at heart is how to fix it?

Another barrier to employment for persons with disabilities is the inability of employers in both the public and private sectors to understand and appreciate the necessity of their obligation to provide reasonable accommodations. The unfortunate narrow-minded view is that it is a

hassle, a burden and/or an 'unnecessary' high cost that their organization would have to incur. The sad reality is that most employers share this myth regarding costs without any supporting empirical evidence to bear and without undertaking any cost/benefit analysis to back up their claims. Nor do they engage in any careful study of the irrefutable evidence that exists in abundance that hiring persons with disabilities 'who are qualified and can do the job' is simply 'good for business'!!

In this vein, the severe lack of accessibility in general in the public space and in the work place, to be more precise, also severely hampers persons with disabilities, especially those with physical disabilities from finding and retaining work. Matters that people without disabilities don't even think about but do by instinct, like crossing the street for instance or going up or down steps, are often Herculean challenges for persons with physical disabilities or simply not possible. Also, just getting from A to B, let alone entering a building, is a huge undertaking for those who have no other means but to use public transportation networks which are by and large inaccessible.

Another factor of major consequence and maybe the most fundamental in my country and elsewhere throughout the developing world is the lack of proper diagnostic testing and assessment. Children with disabilities are very often misdiagnosed or not 'genuinely' diagnosed at all, especially those with intellectual, neurological or developmental disabilities. Misdiagnoses of even a fraction to the left or the right can put the child on the wrong path and lead to disastrous outcomes rendering the young man or woman

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later on incapable of getting the appropriate treatment and rehabilitation, education and work or without the necessary skills and training to secure a job. Misdiagnosis together with a lack of awareness and knowledge on the part of parents and families may lead to exacerbated impairments and a life of severe disablement and seclusion, a lost opportunity that in, most cases, may not be salvaged.

So, what is the solution for Jordan and other countries that face the same predicament vis-à-vis employment for persons with disabilities? The short answer is political will - ownership. Owning the problem and deciding to do something about it according to a national plan that is based upon sound legislation that is implementable. In Jordan, we enacted a new law last year, Law Number 20, for the 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities.' This law came about as a culmination of four years of broad consultation, examination and analysis with all the relevant stakeholders. On employment, it clearly stipulates that 'no person shall be excluded or denied his or her right to work because of a disability.' This article overrode an old antiquated law that had stipulated that anyone with a disability would be categorized as unfit or unsuitable for work. This new law is viewed as very progressive and groundbreaking in our part of the world as it is a clear departure from the medical model in favor of a human rights based approach towards employment. It is of course not up to a medical practitioner to decide what a person with a disability can or cannot do. And the law now clearly states that both the public and private sectors are obligated to hire persons with disabilities according to a percentage of the job vacancies made available.

“When school children without disabilities interact from an early age with children with disabilities the stigma quickly disappears and the students grow up comprehending that human diversity is a normal part of life and that no two people are the same.”

In order to ensure the hiring of persons with disabilities the law provided for the establishment of an 'enforcement mechanism', namely 'the Equal Opportunities Committee.' This committee comes under the umbrella of the 'Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,' the organization that I chair. It is a mechanism with a sole mandate for mediation that facilitates access to jobs for persons with disabilities by providing the technical support for employees and their employers, as well as investigating any claims of discriminatory practice against an employee or a job-seeker with a disability.

Law Number 20 also addresses very clearly the imperativeness of a good education for all children with disabilities and preferably in an inclusive school. When school children without disabilities interact from an early age with children with disabilities the stigma quickly disappears and the students grow up comprehending that human

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diversity is a normal part of life and that no two people are the same. As a result of the law, a new national strategy for inclusive education is soon to be launched and, hopefully, within a few years, the number of inclusive schools in Jordan will increase dramatically. Our hope is that persons with disabilities in the future will land jobs not because of their disability but rather because they are capable and just as qualified to do the job as anyone else provided that the necessary accommodations, whether technical or physical, are met. I believe this is crucial for one's self-esteem, to be hired for one's credentials rather than on the basis of one's disability. And as is often quoted - we hope that persons with disabilities in Jordan will eventually be taxpayers rather than tax takers.

At the structural level I am happy to acknowledge that in accordance with our new law we are obliged to set new standards for diagnostic testing. Last week, in coordination with our Ministry of Health and Health Care Accreditation Council (HCAC), we launched a new set of national standards for accrediting the diagnostic centers that will conduct diagnostic testing for all persons with disabilities in the Kingdom. It will be an arduous task and take a long time, but we have no choice but to do it and to do it correctly. As I mentioned earlier it is the first building block upon which everything else is built, and so we MUST get it right.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As in all countries, we hope in the future to educate employers more and more concerning good practices and to put them on notice or take legal action if need be if they do not hire persons with

disabilities or discriminate against them according to the law. Job coaching, training, mentorship, educating families, making workplaces and public transportation networks fully accessible etcetera, etcetera - the list of must-do's is endless. And that is precisely why my delegation and I have attended this summit, to learn from you, share our experiences, and hopefully take home some new ideas and initiatives that may snowball into something wonderful.

The people in my country and beyond our borders yearn for peace and stability throughout our tormented region. And persons with disabilities in particular like everyone else are demanding their rights - to a good education, to live independently, to access good healthcare and most importantly to secure a job that will grant them financial independence. The ABCs are well known. We know what we have to do to support them and there are no shortcuts. We have to persevere, to work very diligently, and hopefully by the Grace of God and the support that we will be able to muster from our friends and partners we will one day truly emerge as a model for disability rights throughout the region.

I thank you all. ■

Q & A With Tammy Duckworth

U.S. Senator, Illinois

Senator Tammy Duckworth is a veteran, the former Assistant Secretary at the United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, and former director of the Illinois Department of Veteran's Affairs. She was injured in 2004, a helicopter pilot hit by a rocket-propelled grenade resulting in the loss of both her legs. After her recovery Senator Duckworth testified before Congress about the importance of caring for veterans. And then she was elected to the House of Representatives followed by the United States Senate. She serves now on influential committees in the Senate that advocate and allow her to advocate for working families in Illinois and of course, her life-long work of making sure that we support our veterans that have come home from foreign wars and other places.

Senator Tom Harkin (retired): Tell us about your experience in the military, the House, and now the Senate. What made you want to be a public servant?

Senator Tammy Duckworth: When I woke up at Walter Reed, a helicopter pilot that could no longer fly helicopters, I didn't have a mission anymore. I was the highest-ranking amputee patient there for six months, so many other patients came to me with the issues they encountered at Walter Reed—and there were a lot because Walter Reed, or any of the country for that matter, never imagined that we would be at war for as long as we have. The medical care was excellent, but there were no places for spouses or parents to sleep, issues with spouses receiving paychecks for their injured partners, all sorts of things. I had met Dick Durbin and got him involved with helping out with some of these issues. After a few months he told me, "If you don't think this nation is doing right by veterans, then you need to run for Congress." And that's how I got into politics.

Senator Tom Harkin (retired): Is there anything going on in the Senate that you can share with us? Any tidbits of information?

Senator Tammy Duckworth: We're hopeful that we're going to be able to move some legislation. We're hopeful that we can focus less on partisanship and more on sending over legitimate bills that we can actually pass.

Senator Tom Harkin (retired): Up until recently all disability legislation was very bipartisan. There were always naysayers, but not on a partisan basis. I hope that we can get back to more bipartisan work on disability issues. At these summits we talk about competitive, integrated employment. One of the key points for employment for people with disabilities is accessibility. How do you see accessibility developing in our country?

Senator Tammy Duckworth: Accessibility is one of the greatest challenges to someone with a disability to be able to get and keep a job. Metropolitan areas are typically more accessible than rural areas, but even large cities aren't perfect yet. As an example, I toured the L in Chicago and they were so excited about their new initiative to make all of the train stations accessible over the next twenty-five years. It was supposed to be this big announcement and I sort of popped their balloon and asked, "So half a century after the ADA

Q & A With Tammy Duckworth

U.S. Senator, Illinois

you're finally going to make them accessible?" That's just not acceptable. They need to be accessible now, not twenty-five years from now. The momentum in this country is going in the wrong direction. People are trying to find ways to get around the ADA, or even come up with fake reasons why we should get rid of it.

Senator Tom Harkin (retired): I want everyone to know that Senator Duckworth is one of my greatest heroes for a lot of reasons, but especially this. There has been a bill, The ADA Education Act, which has come up at various times. It would have required that anyone filing a suit claiming that a restaurant, business, or building was non-ADA compliant would have to cite the exact part of the ADA that was violated, the exact date and time, all of these things. Then the restaurant or other business would have some amount of time to respond (120 days). And

who knows all of the parts of the ADA? This bill would have allowed for a place that didn't want to be ADA compliant to just stiff you for a long time and it rewarded bad actors. In the last Congress this bill came up again and passed in the House of Representatives, then went to the Senate. But Senator Tammy Duckworth took it upon herself to get enough signatures to oppose it. So thank you for doing that.

Senator Tammy Duckworth: Well before you retired you brought me to your office and told me that you wanted to make sure that somebody carried on your tradition and trusted me with some of the responsibility. I take that very seriously. There was a lot of misunderstanding about what the ADA Education Act was meant to do. People were told that it was to keep people from filing frivolous lawsuits against businesses. I spent a lot of time explaining to them that that was not the case.



Senator Tom Harkin (retired): One of the breakout sessions that we have at this conference focuses on gender inequalities in disability. I will admit openly that I hadn't thought much about it. As a woman with a disability what do you see as unique needs or challenges that women with disabilities face in our society within employment or otherwise?

Senator Tammy Duckworth: One thing that we need to do aside

Q & A With Tammy Duckworth

U.S. Senator, Illinois

from disability is pass the Equal Pay Act. Also, just remember that we don't have paid medical leave or universal parental leave. All of these changes would help to even the playing field for all women, not just women with disabilities. It's tough to be a woman with a disability. It's even tougher to be a mom with a disability. There are a lot of issues for women with disabilities that have to do with childrearing. Employers may already tend to discriminate against women, there is the whole mommy track issue, but then to see them consider a woman with a disability it accumulates and it's really more of a sum of discriminations. There is some difference

between the employability of men versus women including folks with disabilities.

Senator Tom Harkin (retired): We wouldn't let you leave today without asking about our veterans. We have some veterans out here today, and of course, a lot of our disability community is comprised of veterans. How do you view the support systems for veterans in our country in terms of employment opportunities? Are the proper support systems in place?



Q & A With Tammy Duckworth

U.S. Senator, Illinois

Senator Tammy Duckworth: It's a complicated issue. Our first priority needs to be to meet all of the health care needs of our military men and women. That will help with their reemployment ability. The biggest factor that determines whether or not a veteran becomes homeless is their ability to get a job. It's not PTSD or physical injury. For women it gets even more complicated because in the military they get equal pay for equal work. So after they leave the military they see their income drop by at least twenty-eight percent, so they are immediately making less and have a harder time making ends meet. There really are a bunch of things that are happening right now. The Troop Talent Act says that the Department of Defense is responsible for giving military men and women the civilian certification for their military jobs. They acquire all of these skills, but they don't translate into the civilian world. For example, in the civilian world there is not a lot of work for tank mechanics, but if you translate that into a diesel engine mechanic or a heavy equipment operator as opposed to the military job. But all of this effort for greater employability of veterans doesn't matter unless we are able to meet all of their health care needs. To this day the Trump Administration has not filled forty thousand position openings at Veterans Affairs (VA). There are forty thousand openings at the VA for people who serve as everything from mental health counselors, to women's health experts, to homelessness initiatives, to on the job skills. We need to fill all of these jobs so we can deliver the care and give the support that they need.

Senator Tom Harkin (retired): Well, do you have any last thoughts that you want to share with us?

Senator Tammy Duckworth: I think we need to stop thinking about disability issues as a niche issue. We have to think of it as a national issue that is relevant and important to all Americans. Because if we are very lucky we will live a long time and every one of us will develop a disability, whether or not you have one now. When we talk to businesses we have to tell them that this is important because it is something that will affect every one of their customers. We have to change the way that we talk about this. I'm really trying to push that we stop thinking of this as "oh those people over there" but more that this is about all of us as a nation.

Senator Tom Harkin (retired): I can't think of a way to end this on a better note than that. Thank you so much, Senator Duckworth. We are honored by your presence, by your devotion to your country, your service in our military, and your service in the House and Senate. People often ask me, "Do you miss it?" And I say, "No, I don't miss it because I have great friends there that are doing good work and moving this country forward." I can't think of a better one than Senator Tammy Duckworth. Thank you, Senator. ■

Breakout Session: Big Ideas

Victor Calise

Commissioner, New York City Mayor's Office
for People with Disabilities

Marcia Rioux

Distinguished Research Professor, York
University

Pat Romzeck

CEO, Three Talents

At the 2018 Harkin International and Disability Employment Summit, a series of breakout sessions were held in which attendees were challenged to consider “Big Ideas” regarding people with disabilities in the workplace. The series began with presentations from a three-person panel focused on promoting inclusion in the workplace for peoples with disabilities, then transitioned to a question and answer session with the audience and panel, before concluding with a discussion on future goals and how they can be achieved.

Meeting 1

Pat Romzek cited notable statistics in his presentation that highlight the challenges facing people with disabilities in the workplace: 65% of peoples with disabilities graduate high school, 41% enroll in college, and only 2% of people with disabilities have any full-time work experience or bachelor's degree. These educational factors have a significant impact on the prospects of long-term employment in high-paying jobs. Romzek summarized the central theme behind these statistics: “If you keep doing what you’ve been doing, you’re going to keep getting what you’ve been getting.”

Victor Calise examined additional problems facing people with disabilities, including educating these individuals about employment opportunities, finding stable jobs, navigating the increasing role of

technology in the workplace, avoiding long-term unemployment, and dealing with social and emotional obstacles. Calise spoke on the actions taken by the City of New York to make public facilities such as parks and schools more accessible to peoples with disabilities. Calise emphasized the importance of transportation, which he deemed as “the key to everything.” New York is implementing programs that will



Big Ideas

Jackson identified five problems that businesses face with employing people with disabilities:

- 1) Finding talented individuals**
- 2) Providing correct accommodations**
- 3) Finding staff to research into employment issues**
- 4) Getting the approval of human resources**
- 5) Finding jobs with the potential for career growth.**

make 50% of its taxis accessible for people with disabilities by 2020, as well as increasing accessibility at subway stations, city buses, and ferries.

Calise was joined by Martha Jackson, who is the Assistant Commissioner of Employment and Business Relations at the New York Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. In response to these difficulties, Jackson leads a business development roundtable called NYC: ATWORK, which is a private-public partnership that focuses on initiatives that connect people with disabilities to stable, living-wage jobs across greater New York City.

Marcia Rioux shared in her presentation that the Global North should learn from the programs in place for people with disabilities in the Global South. Her research has taken her to India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Rioux stated that the key strategies that should be practiced are building knowledge, bridging the gap, and bolstering success stories for peoples with disabilities.

In her research, Rioux has found that resume training and career fairs are unsuccessful in linking people with disabilities to good paying jobs. Instead, Rioux argued that one should determine the needs of employers and the skills of the people with disabilities: "job matching is what it's all about."

The breakout session then moved to a Question-and-Answer portion. Attendees of the session were curious about how education policy can change to greater assist people with disabilities. The panelists noted that education requirements for high-level jobs are a major obstacle for peoples with disabilities. "Getting a job is not the answer; it's about getting the right job with a career pathway" noted Jackson. However, it is not just higher education that adversely impacts peoples with disabilities; the roots of the problem start with the K-12 school system. Panelists argued that schools need to emphasize building career skills and help people with disabilities obtain internships that give them real-world experience.

Big Ideas

Other Big Ideas Discussed

Employer-driven demand: enabling multinational corporations to hire people with disabilities in developing countries, turning focus to why employers need people with disabilities rather than why people with disabilities need employers.

Skills development: utilizing technology that is accessible to people with disabilities, helping people with disabilities identify their talents through skill visualization.

Early intervention: working with medical professionals and schools, teaching basic skills for people with disabilities.

Attitudinal barriers: boosting self-confidence in people with disabilities, deconstructing stigmas of unemployed workers, reminding people with disabilities of what they can, rather than cannot, do.

Systemic approach: producing more workers who can match people with disabilities with companies that foster career-growth, negotiating disabilities into labor contracts.

Self-awareness and advocacy: reporting statistics for people with disabilities to government agencies, prioritizing people with disabilities as much as other minority groups.

Representation: helping people with disabilities hold political office and work in high-level corporate positions, providing accurate depictions and images of people with disabilities.

Alternative evaluation: considering criteria other than SAT/ACT scores for college acceptance, talking to people with disabilities directly to gain feedback on policy implementation.

The session transitioned from the Q&A to the “Big Ideas” section where attendees discussed major disability policy innovations. One of the ideas was to empower employers to create an inclusive environment that deconstructs misconceptions about the skills of people with disabilities. One of the attendees noted that employers must go further: “inclusion might be the letter of the law but belonging is about the spirit of the law and the way in which inclusion is implemented... we continue to provide technical solutions to adaptive problems.” Thus, changing workplace culture can assist with policy implementation.

Meeting 2

To begin the second meeting of the Big Ideas breakout session, Marcia Rioux gave a brief recap of the previous meeting. Rioux organized the topics discussed in the first meeting into four overarching categories: systemic issues, the mechanics of change, jobs of the future, and sustainability. Topics within the systemic issues group included education, laws, representation, and awareness for people with disabilities. The mechanics group focused on the mechanics of creating change, which included shifting focus from the job-seekers to the employers, identifying the skills of people with disabilities and matching them with jobs, and the role of the family. The jobs of the future group considered ideas on how to assist people with disabilities in obtaining jobs in high-skilled areas such as technology industries. The sustainability group concentrated on finding jobs with high wages and paths for career advancement for people with disabilities.

After explaining the four categories, the attendees moved into four small groups with each group focusing on one of the four categories

Big Ideas

of big ideas. The attendees in each group were tasked with discussing possible solutions for the problems presented in their category before determining concrete action plans that would be shared with the rest of the attendees of the breakout session. The small groups were given close to an hour to arrange their action plan, which would be presented at the third and final meeting of the Big Ideas breakout session the following day.

Meeting 3

The third and final meeting of the Big Ideas breakout session series featured presentations of the concrete action plans created by the four small groups of the breakout session series. Each of the four small groups focused on a specific big idea that is a factor in determining employment

for people with disabilities. Pat Romzek reminded attendees that the goal of the big ideas is to help people with disabilities obtain long-term, high-paying jobs. Romzek emphasized that the action plans should contain measurable and impactful strategies and policies that lead to employment for people with disabilities.

Group 1: Systematic Issues

The first group to present their findings was the systemic issues small group, which took into consideration education, laws, representation, awareness, attitudinal barriers, and transportation for people with disabilities. The group determined four goals that should help people with disabilities overcome structural barriers to employment. The four goals are outlined below:

Policymakers Should:

Immediately abolish old laws based on “low expectations,” enforce existing laws better, and replace old laws with new laws, policies, practices, and funding to promote competitive integrated employment that is written in collaboration with people with disabilities.

- Stop funding segregated work, sheltered work, and subminimum wage work that lowers expectations for all.
- Start funding customized employment and supported employment to increase competitive integrated employment.
- Build capacity through vocational rehabilitation and job centers to train and provide access to customized employment to increase employment for those with significant disabilities.
- Build capacity and support to increase access and funding for people with disabilities to start small businesses.
- Build capacity and expand training opportunities for benefits counseling and address systemic barriers such as limited training and high turnover.
- Include people with disabilities in city, state, and federal contracts and “Minority and women owned business” opportunities.
- Increase enforcement of existing laws that require inclusion of people with disabilities.

Support states to develop a blended certification requiring all educators to be responsible for all students, including students with disabilities.

Appoint an Advisor on International Disability Issues at each country’s Department of State and keep that position filled at the Ambassador level to give direct access to Secretary of State (Cabinet level)

Advocate all countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and translate and implement it into their national laws.

Big Ideas

Group 2: Mechanics of Employment of People with Disabilities

The second group to present was tasked with determining the mechanics of employment for people with disabilities, such as the supply and demand of labor, career development, the role of the family, and identifying the skills of people with disabilities. The group's big idea was moving from training to employment by focusing on the needs of the employer and matching people with disabilities to those needs. A "business equation" was made by the group that argues that informing employers of people with disabilities that meet their needs plus empowering people with disabilities to seek those jobs equals job success and retainment.

Additional recommendations from this group are below:

Mechanics of "how-to" create change:

Train HR representatives and other hiring managers on how to provide adequate accommodations and support for people with disabilities.

Shift focus from training people with disabilities to skills matching with employers.

Equip employers and job seekers with the skills and accommodations that meet the needs of emerging labor markets.

Informing employers of people with disabilities that meet their needs

+ Empowering people with disabilities to seek those jobs

Job success and retainment

Group 3: Jobs of the Future

The third group presented on the topic of jobs of the future with an emphasis on diversity. Group members were asked to consider supply and demand of job seekers and employers, jobs and careers, and technology's impact on the business industry. The goals and their corresponding action-steps that were proposed by the group are below.

Jobs of the future for all people with disabilities will have to:

Ensure meaningful communication and partnerships among people with disabilities and specific sectors that include but are not limited to government, industry, education, and service providers.

Big Ideas

Be responsive to the market (demand) and tailored to the cultural contexts of countries, corporations, businesses, and communities.

Use intentional, systematic, and multifaceted approaches to mitigate negative perceptions (stereotypes, stigma, low expectations) and foster positive images and facts about the capability of all people with disabilities.

Address the opportunities and challenges of neurodiversity and cultural and linguistic diversity among all people with disabilities to:

Ensure appropriate match for knowledge and skills;

Nurture continued professional development and growth over time (i.e., changes due to age, technology, practices, factors and related to disability), and

Attend to the concepts of both “belonging” and inclusion within the workplace.

Be responsive to the potential and strengths among all people with disabilities particularly those who may be overlooked (e.g., those with intellectual disabilities, significant developmental disabilities, health conditions).

Action Steps:

In addition to Human Resources and Disability Inclusion (D&I) professionals, require industry or core business professionals to participate as teams in meetings, symposia, and other forums that focus on disability employment.

Timeline/Responsibility:

The Harkin Institute can assume the lead by encouraging employers/corporations that participate in the Summit to send D&I, Equity,

Big Ideas Action Plan

Meetings, Symposia, Forums

Require industry or core business professionals to participate as teams in meetings, symposia, and other forums that focus on disability employment.



STEP
01



STEP
02

Professional Development

Active participation in core business forums relating to integration of people with disabilities throughout the corporation's/ employer's core business.

STEP
03

Advance and Sustain

Use carrot and stick approaches to advance and sustain the employment of people with disabilities.



Diversity & Inclusion and core business professionals as a team. This assumes that people with disabilities are among these professionals.

Encourage people with disabilities, D&I, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion professionals and other key stakeholders to have a visible presence and voice and actively participate in core business forums (i.e., conferences, board of directors' meetings, company-wide meetings, symposia, professional development and other gatherings) to Disability inclusion should not be limited to “disability inclusion

Big Ideas

forums”, rather it should be a cross-cutting and integrated throughout the corporation’s/ employer’s core business.

Timeline/Responsibility: During planning phases of each Harkin Summit, one active participating corporation/company should be engaged and encouraged to allow both the D&I and core business representatives to participate in a board of directors meeting. The outcomes can be reported during subsequent Harkin Summits. Use carrot and stick approaches to advance and sustain the employment of people with disabilities. This may involve and is not limited to:

Strengthening extant state and federal legislation that affects employment of people with disabilities. In partnership with people with disabilities and their allies, lobby, educate, and inform legislators as an actionable step that can take place now.

Maximizing the use of media, social media, public awareness initiatives, and community-based networks to inform the general public about the capability of people with disabilities, including disparities in employment opportunities.

Increasing awareness and capacity among people with disabilities to understand and access existing tax or national incentives for employment unique to their countries of origin.

Making the process less burdensome for employers to access incentives for employing people with disabilities.

International recognition for employers that integrate people with disabilities in core business. Consider that the United Nation, World Bank, or other renown international entity offer an award that is the equivalent of the Nobel Prize* for Disability Employment.

Timeline/Responsibility:

At the next Summit the Harkin Institute staff and other principals can establish a structure and core group to plan and implement the award. This core group can decide to which international entities to pitch the award, determine the type and scope of the award, define award criteria, determine the selection committee, and five years from 2018 or sooner award the first “Nobel Prize” for Disability Employment. *Nobel Prize is used to denote prestige and worldwide recognition, not that the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, Sweden.

Group 4: Sustainable Jobs

The final group to present was the secure and sustainable jobs group, which discussed non-precarious jobs, operations through government, and the process of moving from temporary jobs to permanent careers. Group members crafted a proposal that used a timeline as its main focus by distinguishing actions that could be taken in 1-2 years to actions that could take 2-5 years to enact.

The group included strategies to carrying out their action plan. The timeline, proposals, and strategies for creating secure and sustainable jobs for people with disabilities is below.

Strategies:

Early identification of career paths

- Based on skills and strengths
- Partnerships with businesses to understand needs

Schools, pre-vocational rehabilitation, transition services, internships, apprenticeships

- Skills-based

Big Ideas

Company leadership

- Hiring goals by companies for people with disabilities.
- Alternative workforce programs that look at the practices of other businesses
- Keeping similar standards for employees
- Public campaigns around new statistics on people with disabilities and employment

Community partnerships that meet company needs

- Create transitional programs that provide a pipeline between people with disabilities and employers, train company staff, and are paid for by businesses (or government).
- Identify best practices and encourage government support (e.g. “pay for success”)

Decoupling support services in the United States

- Ensuring that people with disabilities do not lose Medicaid coverage, assets, and wealth.

The meeting ended with concluding notes from the presenters and a call for action to continue the work of this breakout session at future Harkin Summits. One of the main goals of future meetings is to make the conversation less U.S.-centric and to have a greater international focus. ■

TIMELINE OF SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE JOBS

Identification of **intersectionality** between vocational programs and schools, transitional employment and pre-employment programs while sharing those institutional connections with business industry.

Create **employer-focused** models.

1-2 Years

Push for **incentive-based programs** to allow companies to provide special accommodations for people with disabilities.

2-5 Years

Medicaid Reform

Remove the incentive to stay on Medicaid.

Eliminate the claw pack clause.

Allow for more “wiggle room” in terms of maintaining benefits.

Offset cost of employment (Tax Credits).

Special accommodations for people with disabilities.

Include Technological Assistance Pilot for ease.

Breakout Session: Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals to Transform Livelihoods in the Global South

Mohammed Loutfy

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Rasha Kashan

Editor, BBC Arabic

The 2018 Harkin International Disability Employment Summit held a variety of breakout sessions, with one session focused on leveraging the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to transform livelihoods in the global south. Established in 2015, there are currently 17 goals with over 200 indicators. Of particular note, this is the first time that there are seven goals with indicators that mention disability in development: Goals 4, 8, 10, 11, and 17 specifically acknowledge disability pertaining to education, employment, inequality, infrastructure and sustainable development. These goals are not required to be followed by UN participants (whether developed or developing); however, they are aspirational principles and many countries are dedicated to working toward their implementation. These goals are perceived as a blueprint for peace and prosperity for the future. In 2018 there has yet to be a country who successfully meets every goal, but countries are working towards becoming the first. SDGs are most active throughout the global south, and organizations for people with disabilities in the south tend to be more knowledgeable about the SDGs. However, implementation and discussion of SDGs must not be limited solely to developing countries.



Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals to Transform Livelihoods in the Global South

Meeting 1

The session included two speakers who have worked toward improving disability inclusion in the global community and supporting the application of the SDGs: Mohammed Loufty and Jaehyang So. Both spoke to the role of governments and how their implementation of SDGs impact the lives of people with disabilities. Governments are defensive when it comes to the discussion of disability because they know they are not doing well in this area and they may be reluctant to admit it. The panelists collaborated with the breakout session participants to identify a common multitude of problems throughout countries struggling to advance the livelihoods of people with disabilities. Some of the problems addressed included:

Quotas and Government Willingness:

Countries try to enforce the application of quotas that ensure people with disabilities are employed, but those quotas are not always being filled. There are instances of corruption in some governments relating to whether those organizations are fulfilling their quotas and reporting them correctly. In developing countries, there are high rate of corruption within private companies, which are saying they encourage the hiring of workers with disabilities, but their employment environments contradict that statement. This depletes the integrity of the quota and safety-net system. Enforcement and administration of disability laws by governments could be stronger.

Employment:

Loufty discussed disability in the workplace and the abundance of other factors contributing to daily work life. The efforts of civility organizations have changed the trend of workers being hired just as a ‘favor’ and started a conversation on ensuring inclusion in the labor market. Loufty explained that employment is not just about a job, but rather there are urban development aspects like transportation and infrastructure, and the interaction with customers, colleagues, and employers. According to Loufty, “When providing employment opportunities, we are solving a huge margin of problems represented by poverty and hunger, we are helping to pay medical/health care bills.” The nature of jobs is rapidly changing, and major technological innovations throughout history have resulted in perceived job insecurity, though the number of employed workers keeps growing. There is no evidence that increasing jobs for persons with disabilities will cause others to lose their jobs. But it is a different job growth with future jobs. According to So, “People with disabilities will have better opportunities for jobs in the future, even [kids with autism] can have data analytic jobs. When thinking of disability in employment think ahead and how we can best equip disabled people to lead in those jobs of the future.”

Data:

So spoke about the importance of data regarding the implementation of SDGs and other aspects in the global south. To form solutions, researchers must know who the people with disabilities are, where they are, and what they need. The World Bank is a pioneer in disability related data collection. World Bank Group has had the responsibility of collecting data for 9 of the 17 development goals and has helped the UN in

Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals to Transform Livelihoods in the Global South

Meetings 2 and 3

creating atlases, an open initiative to make all underlying data analysis open to every country. Any country can take the data and analysis and use it to create change in their own country. World Bank advocates reaching out to the VPOs of companies and to look at other data sources in determining how well employers are doing regarding filling their quotas and implementing SDGs. Loufty discussed that organizations are doing a good job of training VPOs to become advocates for employees with disabilities.

Stigma:

Stigma shapes the reactions to and development of governmental efforts to include people with disabilities in the workforce. Loufty explained that employers should be asking: “What extent can we make sure they are doing their jobs and contributing? What extent are they given in their work place to do their job and climb the ladder of employment?” For So and the World Bank, SDGs are important when making differences on the ground in countries. The issue of access to services and needs for disabled persons are foremost for newer countries; the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example is a leader in the inclusion of workers with disabilities, but at the same time, most of their buildings are inaccessible to people with disabilities.

In other meetings in this breakout session, discussion centered around solutions to these problems, focusing on ways to include all countries in obtaining SDGs, and furthering inclusivity for people with disabilities. It was noted

that these discussions cannot just happen between members in the breakout session or small groups, they are larger conversations that need to be happen with everyone and focus on global solutions. The sessions also helped to determine how we can leverage the SDGs to break down differences between the global south and global north and help develop strategies for the future.

As a basis for this discussion, the breakout session understood that people with disabilities need to be included in the discussion of these solutions and problem-solving regarding specific areas. The discussion of disability also needs to intersect into conversations about other areas of development. If these efforts aren’t targeted, then it will be difficult to achieve the SDGs. Session participants realized efforts needed to be made to work together to systematically to support the initiatives, so that disability does not stand alone.

Employment:

When it comes to employment, goal setting and accountability are key for organizations. This should include giving people with disabilities the right support to be able to do their jobs to the best of their ability and to advance within the organization. This will mean making areas and equipment ADA compliant. Data, financial backing, and implementation strategies are all important to consider. These solutions can hopefully improve conditions throughout the private sector and create a

Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals to Transform Livelihoods in the Global South

level of accountability to employees. By creating partnerships and communicating regularly with local governments, private companies can help generate employment opportunities for people with disabilities while helping government take steps toward achieving SDGs. Indeed, it is a governmental function to implement the quotas that have been set. Similarly, research has shown that most companies have social responsibility goals that are community based to help implement development activities. These governmental and private goals can be compatible.

Innovation:

The private sector can help to create innovations to support achieving the SDGs and investigate ways in which the latest technologies can be applied by various countries to achieve diversity goals. A part of this innovation can be leveraging the use of social media in order to mobilize action and distribute information. The United Nations launched an app called “SDGs in Action” which outlines goals and targets of countries while tracking progress towards each goal. Citizen

Sustainable Development Goals

Employment: The Next Steps

Identify and explore the jobs of the future and how they relate to employing people with disabilities.

Explore the idea of universal basic income and how it may help people with disabilities.

Study the ability of jobs to be an outlet for human fulfillment and how it relates to employment.

Define the role of disability within the gig economy.

Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals to Transform Livelihoods in the Global South

users can interact with the platform to create events and invite others to join in action plans to meet the goals. Unfortunately, the app has limited content on disabilities within the SDGs, though improvements can be requested.

Building Capacity:

Individuals and organizations within the international community must align to help improve and help each other towards the achievement of SDGs. DPOs can monitor the progress and report a country's work toward the

SDGs. Loufty brought up the idea of Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) and how they may be helpful in the improvement process. Over the next 12 years, every country will have done a VNR to identify their implementation of the SDGs. It's an opportunity for governments to explore how they and others are addressing the topic of disability.

Breakout session members identified the following next steps to consider in moving this work forward. ■

Sustainable Development Goals

Innovation: The Next Steps

Systematically collect, retain, and distribute data related to disability policy needs to allow for data-driven solutions.

Consider benchmarking countries in relation to one another to help governments, NGOs, and the private sector in learning how to grow together.

Investigate ways technology can help in maintaining relationships and communicating across impacted groups.

Leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals to Transform Livelihoods in the Global South

Sustainable Development Goals

Building Capacity: The Next Steps

Work to get political buy-in on Voluntary National Reports in an effort to get accurate information aggregated at the national level and widely distributed throughout the country.

Work to make all countries understand the scope of the SDGs. (The SDGs, unlike the Millennium Development Goals, apply to everyone and not just the global south.)

Encourage the use of shadow reports by organizations for people with disabilities directed towards SDGs and VNRs.

Create a network of organizations for people with disabilities and bring them together to share success stories.

Breakout Session: Helping Workers Thrive in a Corporate Setting

Carlos Cubia

Global Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, Walgreens Boots Alliance

Mike Ellis

Global Vice President of Accessibility, Sprint

Russell Shaffer

Director - Brand Strategy, Outreach and Benchmarking in the Office of Global Culture, Diversity & Inclusion at Walmart

At the 2018 Harkin International Disability Employment Summit, a breakout session series was held on Helping Workers Thrive in A Corporate Setting. The event featured three speakers who shared their vision for how to achieve this.

During the session, the panelists suggested that the title be changed to reflect the paradigm shift from Helping to Empowering. Helping individuals often implies that there is a constant need of assistance that usually involves one person continuously relying on another in order to be successful at their job. Empowering, on the other hand, is more about providing individuals with the tools, knowledge, and resources they have at their disposal that are there for them to be successful at what it is they desire to do. The role of people with disabilities in the workplace should not be one where they rely on the help of others, it should be one where they are in a position to succeed without ongoing assistance.

The success of almost all employees at every level depends on the individuals around them who they lean on for support, disability or not. Throughout the three-part breakout session series, a variety of themes and barriers were

identified as areas of focus that will be essential for all businesses in moving forward to empower people with disabilities.

Education is a very important piece. How companies can be educated on empowering people with disabilities will differ from firm to firm and requires ongoing evaluation. It is important to educate all employees to assume positive intent. This allows everyone the freedom to ask questions so that they can develop the necessary understanding. Nobody knows it all, and things are constantly changing. Sometimes the only way we are going to learn is by asking questions that might make some people uncomfortable.

It is important for people with disabilities to self-identify in the workplace so that they have access to tools and resources that can aid them in their success. The question is how can an environment and a culture that encourages

Helping Workers Thrive in a Corporate Setting

this culture be created? How do you ensure that people with disabilities will not be treated differently upon self-identification, especially if they have been able to operate adequately already in the workplace? How do you encourage those in upper-management and leadership to self-identify in order to inspire other employees at a firm? Part of creating an inclusive culture is representation for people with disabilities and dispelling the notion that people with disabilities are limited to entry level positions. Every position should be accessible to everyone.

It is not possible for any corporation to be fully knowledgeable about all manner of disabilities.

The key is to train firms to understand that everyone is unique and needs different resources in order to be successful. Everyone deserves the opportunity to prove that, given the proper tools and resources, they can meet and exceed expectations. Larger corporations such as Sprint have created centralized accommodation service centers to help. They are one-stop shops that their employees can turn to with any questions or concerns around accommodations. These resources ensure that the employee only shares information about their disability with those they feel comfortable with. Smaller businesses may not have the luxury of central hubs but can find



Helping Workers Thrive in a Corporate Setting

alternatives to improve the accommodation process, which should be essential for these firms.

Businesses large and small should engage in a level of community involvement, and firms should get acquainted with their local vocational rehabilitation facilities. Additionally, companies can supply volunteers throughout their community that support programs working with people with disabilities. Firms should also find ways to let their communities know that they are an employer that will hire the right individual for the job, regardless of ability. ■

HELPING WORKERS THRIVE IN A CORPORATE SETTING

The group identified the following strategies and recommendations in this area

- 1 Provide training that addresses current gaps and future changes in employing people with disabilities. Tailor training to the unique needs of NGO's, businesses, and communities. Take into consideration the differences between large and small businesses.
- 2 Systematically collect and measure data on employing people with disabilities. Work to ensure people with disabilities are able to self-disclose and self-identify to allow for more accurate data.
- 3 Make sure people who want to work are able to earn equitable and livable wages.
- 4 Investigate ways to end dependency on government benefits.
- 5 Help businesses to create career paths for people with disabilities to excel throughout all levels of the company, not just in entry level positions.

Breakout Session: Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and The Workplace of the Future

Lenore MacAdam

Inclusion Lead, Deloitte Canada

Mark Wafer

CEO, Megleen Treadstone

Frances West

Founder of FrancesWestCo, Author of
“Authentic Inclusion Drives Disruptive
Innovation

At the 2018 Harkin International Disability Employment Summit, a series of breakout sessions were held on Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and the Workplace of the Future. The event featured three speakers who shared their vision for the role that artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies would have in the workplace and for the employment of people with disabilities.

Meeting 1

On the first day of the Harkin Summit, the first meeting of the breakout session was held in the morning. The panel began by addressing the future of work and how inclusive practices fit into their visions of the future. Lenore MacAdam spoke about how the future of work is often imagined as involving wandering robots that are serving humans coffee and taking people’s jobs. But she explains that “4 in 10 companies now believe that automation will have a very big impact on jobs”. Despite this widely shared concern, MacAdam promoted a more optimistic outlook. She called this future the “unleashed workforce” and suggested that while jobs are going away,

they’re also changing and evolving. MacAdam posits that this future workforce will not be replaced by technology, but rather be augmented



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by it.

The panel then discussed their projections for key trends in the next five to ten years. They identified seven disrupters which they believe will broadly impact the economy and workforce. These disrupters were technology, the overload of data, AI cognitive computing and robotics, automation, diversity and generational changes, the changing nature of careers, and the explosion of contingent work. The panel also noted, however, that these trends weren't necessarily related to inclusion of people with disabilities.

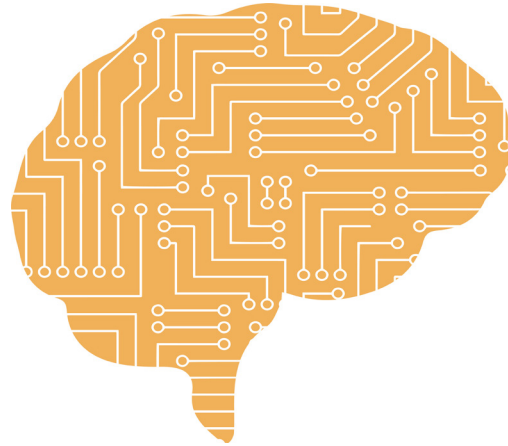
According to Macadam and Frances West, there are three dimensions to the future of work that will be very beneficial to people with disabilities. Those three dimensions are:

- 1) What kind of work it is.
- 2) Who is going to be doing it.
- 3) Where will it be done.

These three dimensions particularly impact the unique capabilities and needs of people with disabilities. For instance, the increasing flexibility of the workplace itself and work hours will be advantageous for people with disabilities.

Meeting 2

During the second meeting of the breakout session, attendees drafted a sizable list of key trends that they were coming across in their work in disability inclusion and technology. This list of trends was then distilled into five key trends: the changing nature of work, new ideas of careers, AI/machine learning, changing demographics, and a renewed focus on skillsets rather than credentials.



The panelists then divided the room into two working groups to examine the five big trends. These working groups were charged with examining the five trends from either a positive (Team Optimists) or negative (Team Pessimists) perspective. The intent was to produce a list of opportunities and challenges associated with each of these five trends in order to properly contextualize how AI, technology, and the future of the workforce will impact people with disabilities.

Regarding the changing nature of work, attendees determined that one opportunity was that the future of work would allow for greater accessibility, particularly as it relates to the physical office environment and the ability to work remotely/self-accommodate. But the group also determined concerns such as the antisocial nature of open offices and the difficulty for those who struggle with focusing to engage in future workplaces.

The conversation around the changing nature of work segued into the second major trend which concerned new ideas of careers. This idea was examined by the groups, which suggested that careers are becoming more flexible and that the increasing acceptance of alternate career

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trajectories would be beneficial to people with disabilities. This conversation also included discussion about startup culture, as well as the pervasive inadequacy of educational and vocational quality for people with disabilities might inhibit people with disabilities from adapting to newer careers and work in the same way that able-bodied people would be able to.

Discussion then turned to the third big trend: AI/machine learning. The possibility that these new technologies would expand opportunities for people with disabilities as new market segments open up was discussed, as well as the ways in which AI and machine learning may help make work and workplaces more accessible for people with disabilities; however, there was also extensive discussion about how people with disabilities and other marginalized groups are likely to be subjected to discrimination by AI and machine learning due to the unconscious biases of persons programming these technologies.

The fourth major trend that was examined was changing demographics. In this portion of the discussion, attendees were enthusiastic about how aging populations could increase the frequency of cross-generational learning among members of the workforce. Discussion shifted to how the realities of an aging population, paired with evolution in the job market, would increase the need for people with disabilities who previously may have been excluded for various inclusion-related issues, to join the workforce. Among the many challenges accompanying changing demographics that the attendees identified included backlash against minority groups and tokenization of people with disabilities in the workplace.

The final major trend was the new focus on skills by employers. These skills include both technical and creative skills. This renewed focus on skills

allows for members of the labor force to go back and demonstrate prior knowledge, develop new skills later in life, and to increase skills training in workplaces. The identified challenge was that this trend could put pressure on outdated systems of education that aren't meeting the needs of employers.

Meeting 3

During the final meeting of the AI breakout session, the presenters reviewed the conversations from the first two meetings. The presenters also explained

STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

GOVERNMENT/EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- Redesign and improve education systems to adequately prepare students at both K-12 and higher education levels.
- Reimagine education as more continuous and malleable rather than degree/credential focused – leading to more skills-based competencies in education.
- Elect more people with disabilities to public office and increase their involvement in politics to advocate for themselves and for the sake of representation.
- Establish an “ADA for the internet” to ensure that technology and the internet are inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Create public policies that have goals and incentives to employ people with disabilities.

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STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

BUSINESSES

- Operationalize inclusion to ensure people with disabilities can thrive in the workplace.
- Assess current technology applications used by firms and see whether they meet the needs to people with disabilities.
 - Ensure that technology applications in business environments are being updated to ensure inclusion of people with disabilities.
 - Verify that business vendors and contracts meet similar accessibility and inclusivity standards.

how during the final breakout session they would consider various strategies and recommendations to address each of the five previously identified trends. These strategies and recommendations were divided into three industries: businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government/educational institutions. ■

STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)

- Develop a greater understanding of business needs and employer goals (especially regarding culture and training).
- Partner with disabilities organizations rather than focus on charity.
- Expand partnerships with businesses to better match firms and people with disabilities in the workforce.
- Continue to solve for the “digital divide” between people with disabilities and able-bodied people.
 - Educate people with disabilities on how to navigate new technologies.
 - Normalize access to tools in business and education for people with disabilities.
- Reimagine business and work models and ensure that NGOs think more strategically about the future of the workforce and workplace.
- Advocate for inclusive policies, education, and technologies.

Closing the Gender Gap

Claudia Gordon

Director of Government and Compliance, Sprint
Accessibility

Deepti Samant Raja

Disability and Development Consultant, The
World Bank

Liz Sayce

Senior Honorary Fellow, London School of
Economics

At the 2018 Harkin International Disability Employment Summit, a breakout session series, entitled “Closing the Gender Gap,” was held. The sessions focused on creating initiatives to expand and promote inclusivity in the workplace, focusing on closing disparities for women with disabilities.

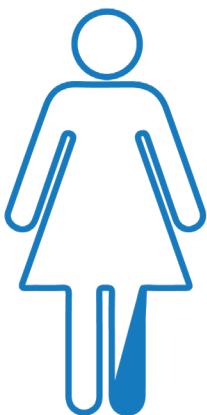
Meeting 1

The first session focused on what initiatives could be undertaken by organizations to mitigate the gender gap for women with disabilities. This includes employers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governments. The purpose of this breakout session was to engage these groups to examine how best to move forward in closing the gender gap for women with disabilities. The question that was asked was: What does it mean when we think about closing the gender gap?

Panelists covered the rapid shifts in the employment marketplace and how to combat gender gaps through technology and education. Discussion covered how technological advances are shifting what people with disabilities can accomplish in the workplace. Deepti Raja talked about the rise in people with disabilities deciding to become

self-employed, but women with disabilities are having a much more difficult time getting loans and other assistance to aid in their entrepreneurial dream.

Liz Sayce presented on how the United Kingdom is responding to the gender gap by creating a ‘visibility movement’ facilitated through their government to create more awareness. She mentioned how, for example, the gender gap for employment in the United Kingdom is 8.7%, and the disability gap for employment is 30%. Adding to the concern is that initiatives undertaken in the past decade to close employment gaps have had little effect. The U.K. has started collecting data



“The gender gap for employment in the United Kingdom is 8.7%, and the disability gap for employment is 30%.”

Closing the Gender Gap

on these topics.

Beginning in 2018, employers of over 250 employees are required to provide data concerning the pay gap in their own workplaces. After first publication of the data, there was a public outcry over the large disparities in storied institutions in the U.K., and that attention to the issue pushed broader initiatives to occur.

Discussion continued from there on what governments, specifically the United States Government, has done or can do to improve the gender gap. Claudia Gordon talked about the initiatives undertaken during her time in the Obama Administration to amend requirements for fair pay. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 required companies to pay women equal to men

if they had the same experience and position, but she acknowledged that the bill only went so far in terms of efficacy. Jumping ahead to the Obama Administration, Claudia discussed the passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act which strengthened pay parity standards; however, there are still instances of governmental policies that continue to discriminate against people with disabilities. In particular, the subminimum wage law came up, something that Senator Tom Harkin

(retired) fought against. The law states that wages for individuals with disabilities can be set at lower rates than the current national minimum wage.

The group discussed a need for workplaces to be more transparent when considering women with disabilities. Part of the process for that comes from creating an environment in which self-reporting of an individual's disability is comfortable and non-retaliatory. In addition, the quality of

the job that is being provided also needs to be considered. Instead of just having opportunities for jobs, as Sayce said, the opportunities must be beneficial whether in terms of experience or compensation. There was a brief discussion on redefining the term "disability." Members considered the term to be too broad, and they believed that the connotative elements of the term dissuade employers from talking about disability issues or considering people with disabilities for employment. There was agreement

that varying terminology would benefit the conversation.

The panel identified shortfalls within the organizational structure that can create disadvantages. For example, there can be a lack of flexibility for women with disabilities. Restrictive workplace practices, like limited time for bathroom breaks, complicate the situation for some women. There are further issues in discussing pay disparity. The panelists noted

"Instead of just having opportunities for jobs, the opportunities must be beneficial whether in terms of experience or compensation."

Closing the Gender Gap

that many companies maintain policies that bar employees from asking each other their salaries. An important additional disadvantage identified is harassment, namely sexual harassment, by fellow co-workers. Because many organizations treat issues through the lens of singular identities, such as gender or race, there becomes a greater disconnect in remedying the situation.

Meeting 2

The breakout session held on Thursday afternoon focused on the creation of new solutions for organizations and building upon current initiatives already undertaken to address issues identified. Themes also included improving accountability and structural design within organizations and fostering a better understanding of women with

disabilities in relation to their daily lives.

One thing brought up by the group was the cultural divides that pertain to gender, both inside and outside the workplace. Especially in developing countries, the panel noted that accessibility for women with disabilities was in some ways overridden by the traditional gender identity norms of those areas. This led into a discussion of how to involve the ideas of intersectionality in the conversation. Intersectionality is the concept that people have multiple identities and should be treated as such, as opposed to applying individual identities within given situations. The panel considered this a major hurdle in overcoming the gender gap for women with disabilities when instances of discriminatory treatment are looked at only in the context of a specific identity. When considering only gender in workplace environments, the panel concluded,



Closing the Gender Gap

it becomes a major disservice to disability needs.

In addition to promoting the understanding of intersectionality, the creation and promotion of more role models in the public sphere and in the workplace for women with disabilities was also discussed. By changing the general culture through the basic mediums of entertainment, it allows for stronger empowerment to reverberate into the workplace culture. Creating events such as conferences and symposiums hosted by women to embolden women with disabilities was considered. In many cases, initiatives like those have been shown through interviews to empower success in women with disabilities in the workplace.

Creating a united front in advocacy work was also identified as important. Deepti Raja initiated a discussion about growing awareness and allocating resources to aid in advocacy. The group talked about creating better connected communities of women with disabilities, such as through advocacy groups. Even though everyone agreed about the benefits, there was concern about how resources provided would be allocated. There were additional issues brought up regarding the competitive nature of organizations to qualify for money, which can undermine the common goal. One solution considered was to improve the networks between these groups to foster cooperation for the greater goal of closing the gender gap. The group thought that if the advocacy was framed more as a collaborative research project, then the visibility movement and these organizations would be stronger.

Discussions went onto diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The panelists felt that more is needed than simply engaging groups of individuals affected; there is also a need to have allies in the workplace involved in the conversation. Men are needed in the conversation, especially due to the disproportionate number of men in leadership positions at companies. Additionally, women

with disabilities should be actively encouraged to apply for higher-level positions and take advantage of available leadership programs.

The application and hiring process was another important component of the discussion. The point was made that if the applicants for a job reflect much of the employer's current population, the chance is high that the employer will pick someone who fits that mold. By having a diverse applicant pool, there is a greater chance of creating more inclusive environments. In addition, the unconscious bias of employers impacting the likelihood of hiring someone different could be mitigated if the pool was more inclusive of different groups of people.

Meeting 3

The final meeting of the gender gap discussion on Friday morning reviewed the previous two sessions and identified initiatives that could be undertaken by organizations to close the gender gap for women with disabilities. The strategies were divided into the three categories of organizational implementation discussed: Employers, Governments, and Non-Governmental Organizations. ■

Closing the Gender Gap

HOW NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS CAN CLOSE THE GENDER GAP

Employing women with disabilities.
Having them in leadership positions.

Holding high-profile events with disabled people presenting.

Developing mentoring programs that target women with disabilities and promote their well-being and confidence.

Growing the number of data collection systems.

Creating partnerships with other organizations to gain larger sets of data for research and tracking progress on inclusivity rates for women with disabilities.

Creating accessibility standards for service projects.



Closing the Gender Gap

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN CLOSE THE GENDER GAP

Promoting role models in the workplace

Having events hosted by women with disabilities and holding conferences, symposiums, and workshops relating to women and disabilities

Focusing affirmative action programs on women with disabilities

Through active recruiting on colleges and universities and creating internship programs.

Allowing for a greater level of transparency

Restructuring or creating guidelines that deal with issues such as pay disparity and sexual harassment, and having the disclosure of disabilities be a non-judgmental and non-retaliatory process.

Collecting data to understand the gap and its effects

Conducting studies and surveys of employees.

Creating a top-down approach in dealing with situations

Training people in management and creating company-wide accountability and disciplinary standards.

Utilizing better recruitment tools to hire women with disabilities

Creating a more efficient application process, using the internet and other technology to increase usability, having clearer and appropriate language to appeal to them, and creating apprenticeship and training programs.

Closing the Gender Gap

HOW GOVERNMENTS CAN CLOSE THE GENDER GAP

Better enforcement of existing anti-discrimination programs

Including language on intersectionality and mandating equitable, supportive environments for employees.

Creating affirmative action programs

Increasing the number of women with disabilities in the workplace.

Investment in educational opportunities.

Promoting disabled individuals to stay in the educational system and creating guidelines on post-secondary options for education.

Tying government funding of NGOs and contractors to the level of accessibility for disabled people

Requiring employers to have better disability accommodations such as wider bathroom stalls or ramps

Tying accessibility requirements with project funding to employers and NGOs

Collecting and disclosing data on the gender gap



Impacts

Identified strengths of the Harkin Summit initiative to date:

The **diversity** of representation both in terms of countries and organizations who have attended, which resulted in a consistent message and shared dialogue/agenda across many entities.

Relationship building and the resulted in spin off conversations and activities.

The Next Steps:

1. Establishment of topic-specific networks
2. Post-secondary Inclusion
3. Policy implementation
4. Innovative practices

Further Investigation of the Results of the Harkin Summit:

What innovative strategies have been identified and replicated/scaled up?

Has there been any documented change in employment outcomes or policies in any of the participating countries?

Have relationships developed or frameworks expanded?

What strategies have been identified to meet The Harkin Challenge?

Have changes been implemented?



Impacts

Thank you to the following groups who have participated in all three years of the Harkin Summit. These groups are our starting point for quantifying change.

Humanity & Inclusion / Handicap International
(France)

Iowa UCEDD (US)

U.S. Dept. of State (US)

Essl Foundation (Austria)

Anthem (US)

AUCD (US)

JP Morgan Chase (US)

Ford Foundation (US)

World Institute on Disability (US)

US International Council on Disabilities (US)

Disability:IN (US)

Kessler Foundation (US)

Wells Fargo (US)

World Bank (US)

Onus Group (Bangladesh)

Leonard Cheshire Disability (UK)

Microsoft (US)

V-shesh Learning Services Private Unlimited
(India)

York University, Marcia Rioux & Douglas
Waxman (Canada)

Romano Group (US) - Neil Romano appointed
as Chair of US National Council on Disability

Three Talents (US)

London School of Economics - Switching Focus
report; collaboration with UCEDDs

Take the Harkin Challenge

Help provide competitive, integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities

At the 2017 Harkin International Disability Employment Summit, Senator Tom Harkin (retired) issued a bold challenge: to double the labor force participation rate of people with disabilities in the United States and around the world within 10 years.

In his 40 years in Congress, Senator Harkin played a leadership role in enacting a legislative agenda that advanced the civil and human rights of children and adults with disabilities. In the process, he worked closely with leaders of the disability rights movement around the U.S.

Over time, he became increasingly focused on one area – helping people with all types of disabilities participate fully in their communities by working in the competitive labor market.

Tackling this problem will require us to work together across sectors – government, business, researchers, disabled people's organizations, educators, service providers, family leaders, philanthropy, religious institutions, media – with a common goal of generating new approaches that bring sectors together to re-imagine what is possible.

These proceedings are just one way in which Senator Harkin, The Harkin Institute, and other members of the Harkin Summit planning committee are working help individuals and organizations around the world advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



Take the Harkin Challenge

Help provide competitive, integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities

“We need to be open to bold new ideas that no one has tried before. We need to be willing to take risks and fail, because that is how we will learn. And we need to listen to each other across sectors, with disabled people and their organizations always helping to center the strategies on the goals and dreams of disabled people...who seek to have jobs, careers, and lives filled with meaning and purpose, with the dignity and self-esteem that come from earning a decent living and being a valued member of your community.”

**– Senator Tom Harkin (retired),
2017 Harkin International Disability
Employment Summit**



HARKIN SUMMIT

www.harkinsummit.org