

United States International Council on Disabilities

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Delivered to the membership of USICD
Annual Meeting, April 20, 2009

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been a busy and productive year for USICD. The new Board members elected in March 2009 came in ready to lead and help USICD realize its tremendous potential. Their vision includes building the organization's financial and staff capacity and developing programming to benefit our members and increase USICD's role in the international disability rights movement. The Board determined that USICD could no longer continue operating with only a single half-time staff member, depending so heavily on the volunteer efforts of the Board to achieve our many goals, and thus the bulk of 2008 was devoted to a concerted fundraising effort led by the volunteer Board. This effort proved successful and USICD secured a capacity-building grant, allowing for the hiring of our first full-time staff Executive Director, as well as funding initiating an Education and Outreach Campaign in 2009.

In January 2009, David Morrissey was hired into the role of Executive Director. His experience in disability organizations and disability policy at both the local and national levels, as well as his international fieldwork and conference experiences, made him a perfect fit for this position. David's approach to the development of USICD and his philosophy of collaboration have aligned with the Board's vision well and his first three months of tenure have already resulted in forward momentum on all fronts. In March 2009, David announced the hiring of Katherine Guernsey into the role of Education and Outreach Director. Kathy's legal experience in the drafting process at the United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and her broad field work experience with international and disabled persons' organizations made her also a perfect fit for this position. The board and I welcome these two dynamic professionals to the USICD staff.

Our busiest program area has been CRPD Ratification and Implementation. In 2008 USICD convened meetings with stakeholders and advocates on CRPD ratification strategy and we continue to work with many allies to spearhead the US ratification effort. President Obama has committed to signing the CRPD and pushing the Senate to ratify it, but it will take a concerted effort by the disability community to accomplish this! I look forward to keeping our members abreast of positive developments in this mission.

Looking forward, the leadership of USICD continues its focus on capacity building, program development, and being a strong voice of advocacy. Our relationships with Disabled Persons' International, Rehabilitation International, the domestic disability grassroots movement through such organizations as the American Association of People with Disabilities and the National Council on Independent Living, among others, are growing into new areas of collaboration and bringing new partners into our work.

I would like to make a special thank you to Joelle Balfe for her vital contribution to USICD's capacity building during this past year. The volume of proposals submitted and the organizational support she provided to me and the Board truly moved us forward toward our goals. I am also pleased to recognize and thank Andrea Shettle who has served USICD this semester working

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closely with David on a variety of projects in fulfillment of the practicum requirement of her graduate program in International Development at Galludet University. Thank you, Andrea! And thanks to Galludet, a valued partner to USICD.

USICD relies on the volunteer efforts of its board, students, and members, and I look forward to further working together. David and the Board will continue to develop new opportunities for our supporters to be engaged in our work and new features that add value to your membership. Without YOU, we could not have had this successful year and could not move forward with such potential.

Marca Bristo, President

TREASURER'S REPORT

In 2008, the Board and Finance Committee focused on building USICD's financial foundation through management of its finances and grant development activities. This focus on building our general operating account was necessary to equip the organization for moving forward, including engaging a development consultant. As part of this capacity building strategy, the Board decided to unrestrict USICD's investment account in order to further build the organization's operating capital. Throughout 2008, the finance committee led USICD in adhering to a small budget and in the end of 2008, the organization came in under budget in expenses. With the awarding of two substantial grants, USICD entered 2009 with a newly installed full time Executive Director to lead the organization in further capacity building, development of new program areas, and high capacity on a lean budget.

In March 2009, USICD completed its 2008 audit that showed no issues with its financial management. A copy of the audit is attached to this Annual Report.

Committee Members: Jeff Rosen, Lee Schulz, Glen White. Ex officio: Marca Bristo, Board President.

Jeff Rosen, Treasurer

CRPD-FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

USICD has held two community-wide national CRPD Ratification Strategy Sessions over the past year, each with more than 100 participants, to initiate discussions among disability advocacy groups about US ratification and implementation and begin work on a national ratification strategy. The USICD CRPD Program Team also convened a high-level stakeholder strategy session in July, during which USICD was requested by the group to continue to serve as the facilitator for this effort to educate the US disability community on the CRPD. We have conducted a number of outreach meetings to members of Congress and their staff to introduce them to the CRPD.

The Foreign Policy and Disability Program Team has also been active. Chair, John Kemp, and USICD's President, Vice President and Past President met with USAID staff to advocate for increased funding of disability-related programming, stronger efforts to mainstream a disability perspective into all USAID initiatives, implementation of USAID's existing disability policy, and explicit recognition by the US State Department that US disability rights law requires US government funded programs to be accessible and appropriate to people with disabilities. Eric

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Rosenthal was recently asked to speak about USICD's work to the National Council on Disability (NCD). In his presentation, Rosenthal called on NCD to ask USAID for an effort to evaluate the impact of the USAID disability policy to determine whether or not USAID projects abroad are accessible to people with disabilities. We are continuing this dialogue and hope that the new change in administration will also make our work on this front a little easier.

The Chairmen of the CRPD and Foreign Relations Program Teams decided to unify their committees in early 2009 due to shared focus areas and to most efficiently coordinate advocacy efforts.

Eric Rosenthal and John Kemp, Co-Chairs

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Sub-committee of the USICD Board convened itself six (6) times April '08 to April '09. Teleconferences were exclusively used to convene members. Proceedings were compiled for each Teleconference. The subcommittee's objectives mirrored the objectives of rebuilding USICD as adopted by the USICD Board. The approach to building membership centered on harnessing the strengths of the Board. Example: an organization known to have high cross-over interests in USICD issues would be contacted by a duly elected Board Member. A membership letter jointly signed by USICD's President, Marca Bristo, and the Board Member would be sent to the identified key contact person. Follow up would be executed by the Board Member.

All the "first wave" organizations to approach were contacted using the above process. Also, a second solicitation of NICL Membership was done. The 2009 Membership Renewal Drive, initiated in March, has generated \$3,815.00 in income for USICD.

Members: David Hutt, David Oaks, Barbara LeRoy, Joan Durocher, Judy Heumann, Randy Rutta. Convenor and Chair: Susan Parker. Ex Officio Members: Marca Bristo, President and John Lancaster, Immediate Past President. **Meetings:** April 14, June 2, August 24, October 18, February 9, 2009.

Activities/products

1. Design, execution of a "First Wave" solicitation of new members.
2. New materials developed included: '08 and '09 membership letter, '08 and '09 membership form, USICD brochure method of contact for strategically key organizations, delegation of responsibility for follow up;

Ongoing Challenge: refreshing of a USICD Message relevant to whet the appetite for membership into a broadly focused US 501 C3 dedicated to promotion of issues and calls for action re international disability. **Secondary challenge:** communicating the message regularly and timely to members, including those prospectively interested.

Susan B. Parker, MSW/MSP, Chair

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RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Working with a development consultant in 2008, the Resource Development Committee secured a major capacity-building grant from the Prince Foundation, providing for the hiring of a full-time Executive Director. The committee also secured a grant for its Education and Outreach Initiative, providing for the hiring of a part-time director for this program and the necessary funds to launch the program in 2009 with an array of conference presentations and other educational events, the first of which are detailed below. Additional funding proposals, begun in 2008 are pending with additional funding organizations and the committee in 2009 will continue to convene to identify and develop relationships between USICD and potential partners.

Education & Outreach Initiative

Recognizing the increasing importance of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to USICD's membership, the Committee decided to expand the range and scope of USICD's education and outreach activities related to the CRPD and human rights. The Committee sought and obtained funding to formalize and support such initiatives, and as a consequence was able to create the position of Education and Outreach Director. This position was filled in early 2009, with the Director providing dedicated staff support to USICD's education and outreach program, as well as providing technical support throughout the USICD organization. In addition to developing online CRPD resources and pursuing further opportunities for collaboration with USICD members and other organizations, immediate upcoming activities in 2009 include:

- April 24 - participation of USICD at the Bringing Human Rights Home Network's strategy session on US ratification of human rights treaties, to be held at Columbia University Law School. USICD representatives have been invited specifically to discuss the CRPD ratification process in the United States.
- April 30 - USICD will provide a briefing on the CRPD to the staff of the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.
- May 2-5 - USICD will provide a CRPD-themed workshop at the Pacific Rim International Forum, as well as a panel presentation on the CRPD during the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disabilities.
- June 5-8 – USICD will participate in a panel on the CRPD at the National Conference of NCIL, the National Council on Independent Living. USICD will also co-host an “International Reception” with the NCIL International Committee as a outreach activity for raising awareness of USICD activities and membership.
- June 11-13 - USICD will be represented on panels (by President Marca Bristo) at the conference "Accessibility in the Context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Transatlantic Perspectives" hosted by the European Union Center of Excellence, University of Pittsburgh.

Randy Rutta, Chair

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