The membership of USICD has a vision of a world where the civil and human rights of persons with disabilities are protected and advanced, where the capacities and talents of persons with disabilities are celebrated and elevated, and where people with disabilities come together across borders as a global disability community.
Rallying for Disability Rights

On July 29, 2014, the National Council on Independent Living, a USICD member organization, held its annual march onto Capitol Hill and rally. USICD thanks NCIL and all of the rally speakers for placing significant emphasis on United States ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Many of the great rally speakers that day called out, “What do we want?” and the audience always answered back loudly, “CRPD Now!” This positive energy was maintained throughout the afternoon as many rally participants then proceeded to visit the Senate offices to call on their members to support ratification.
Dear USICD Members and Friends:

In the past year, USICD has built upon and expanded its existing initiatives and grown in new directions. The campaign for U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) remains robust with more than 850 allied disability, veterans, religious, business, and humanitarian organizations. Although a renewed vote on the CRPD was not scheduled in 2013, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee did move forward with two hearings on the CRPD in November that year, and in July 2014 the CRPD passed out of the Foreign Relations Committee with bipartisan support. We look to the Senate to RATIFY NOW and work daily toward this goal with coalition partners across the United States.

USICD has engaged in new overseas initiatives. In partnership with World Learning, USICD Disability Law and Policy consultant Allison DeFranco supported efforts to plan and implement the first-ever Myanmar National Disability Conference held in June 2014 in Yangon. This historic event brought together more than 500 participants from all regions and states to create a national-level cross-disability coalition. On the third day of the conference, participants voted for representatives of the newly formed Myanmar Council of Persons with Disabilities. USICD has also just announced joining a new collaboration under the leadership of Mobility International USA, with funding support from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor of the U.S. Department of State, to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of disability rights legislation and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at national and local levels in Kenya, Mexico and Vietnam.

The Youth in International Development Affairs (YIDA) internship program continued for its second year in the summer of 2014, bringing eight students and recent graduates aspiring to careers in international development to Washington to complete internships at eight international organizations in the DC area. A core grant from the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF) and a supplemental grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation make USICD’s work to promote new talent in our field possible.

The addition of a new Chief Development and Communications Officer, Kevin Locke, to USICD’s team in October 2013 has allowed us to increase the marketing, positioning, and development of the organization. This has included identifying and pursuing new avenues for pursuing funding support, and outreach to new corporate, foundation and individual supporters for USICD’s current and future work.

USICD is now organizing its first Gala for the eve of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities this December 2nd, 2014, to be attended by members of the Board, donors, friends, and members as well as congressional, corporate, and institutional partners of USICD. At the event USICD will be honoring global disability rights champion Professor Gerard Quinn of the National University of Ireland at Galway. We really hope that you will mark your calendar and attend this milestone event.

Marca Bristo, President
David Morrissey, Executive Director
TREASURER’S REPORT

A community of funding and project partners has made USICD’s work possible. General operating support and program grants for USICD’s education activities in support of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) have formed a core of USICD’s grant funding. A new Strategic Plan provides a comprehensive vision for mid- and long-term resource development and the priorities for managing this growth strategically.

An independent audit of USICD’s 2013 financial statements conducted in March 2013 by AAL Certified Public Accountants found that all financial records were accurate and maintained in conformity with standard accounting principles accepted in the United States. A copy of this audit is available upon request. **Finance Committee:** David Hutt, Chair and Treasurer; Aubrey Webson, Barbara LeRoy, Jeff Rosen.

### Revenue Sources

**2010**
- **Contributions:** 2%
- **Membership:** 4%
- **Foundation Grants:** 50%
- **USAID Sub-Contract: Global Disability Rights Library:** 44%

**2010 Revenue:** $422,063

**2011**
- **Contributions:** 4%
- **Membership:** 7%
- **Foundation Grants:** 50%
- **USAID Sub-Contract: Global Disability Rights Library:** 37%

**2011 Revenue:** $450,827

**2012**
- **Contracts:** 30%
- **Contributions:** 6%
- **Membership:** 6%
- **Foundation Grants:** 58%

**2012 Revenue:** $523,784

**2013**
- **Contributions:** 5%
- **Membership:** 5%
- **Foundation Grants:** 88%

**2013 Revenue:** $585,808
MEMBERSHIP

USICD has seen a steady growth in our membership over the past four years, due to expansion in both our organizational and individual member categories. Our membership has expanded to include individuals and organizations spanning 27 states and the District of Columbia, and includes centers for independent living, academic departments, protection and advocacy organizations, international development actors, and a breadth of others who are all committed to the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities.

USICD continues to reach out to Federal agencies to expand representation in our non-voting Government Membership; in 2011, our Government Members included the National Council on Disability, the U.S. Access Board, the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Programs, the Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Department of Transportation.

Membership Committee: Joan Durocher, Chair; Patricia Morrissey, Eric Rosenthal, Michael Winter, Betsy Valnes

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

CRPD STATUS IN THE UNITED STATES

The national movement for United States ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, or Disability Treaty) has been growing since national signature to the treaty in July 2009. Today, this campaign includes bipartisan Senators, over 800 disability and allied organizations from the local, state and national levels, faith groups, major corporations and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Business Roundtable and National Association of Manufacturers, the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, Team USA Paralympic Athletes, all of the major veteran associations and a number of high-ranking retired military officials and AARP.

In September 2013, the National Council on Disability convened community members from around the country to learn about the disability treaty. In partnership with NCD, USICD provided the treaty training and facilitated dialogue among the participants. VetsFirst representative Heather Ansley, Blinded Veterans Association representative Tom Zampieri, Disability Rights International representative Eric Rosenthal, AT&T executive Susan Mazrui, Leadership Conference representative Ellen Buchman and Jewish Federations of North America representative David Feinman shared why ratification was important to their stakeholders, as well as what their organizations are doing to support the effort. It was an energetic program that spread awareness of the CRPD. That same month, USICD collaborated with Deaf community leaders to leverage Deaf Awareness Week for promoting ratification on Capitol Hill.

In November 2013, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held two hearings on the CRPD and in July 2014 passed a resolution for ratification Committee with bipartisan support. USICD worked with coalition organizations to deliver a national combined petition of over 67,000 signatures to the Senate, and had ongoing collaboration with allied groups such as Students for CRPD. The visibility and support for U.S. ratification of the CRPD continues to grow every day.

This diverse community’s efforts, coordinated by USICD, has generated extensive media coverage in local and national media outlets, a wave of constituent advocacy through letters and calls reaching Senators in their Washington and district offices, and a strategic collaborative effort engaging high level validators, former Congressional members, and international legal experts all working toward a singular goal of passage in the Senate in 2014. Now is the time for every voice to call on the U.S. Senate and demand: RATIFY CRPD NOW!

Visit our citizen action website, www.disabilitytreaty.org, to access and share CRPD educational material, social media messaging, and advocacy tools to support every voice in advocating for U.S. ratification.
USICD was thrilled to welcome its second fellow from the Community Solutions Program sponsored by IREX and the U.S. State Department in late 2013. Jagoda Risteska is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of MC-Mobility Challenge, a non-profit organization that focuses on improving access to education, employment, and public institutions for women with disabilities. She is dedicated to social change and empowering people with disabilities, having first-hand experience with a disability as result of Muscular Dystrophy. She also participated in the 4th Women’s Institute on Leadership and Disability in Eugene, Oregon in 2008, organized by Mobility International USA, which inspired her and her colleagues to start their NGO a year later. Following the Community Solutions Program, Risteska plans to focus her work on motivating women with disabilities to actively participate in all spheres of social life, increasing their awareness and self-esteem.

Myanmar Holds First-Ever National Disability Conference

USICD Disability Law and Policy consultant Allison deFranco supported the Working Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WCRPD) to plan and implement the first ever Myanmar National Disability Conference that was held June 10-12 in Yangon.

The historic event brought together over 500 participants with disabilities from all regions and states to discuss the barriers that persons with disabilities face throughout the country, and to create a national level cross-disability coalition. The opening ceremony featured video remarks provided by the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, U Thein Sein, remarks prepared by the Chairperson of the National League for Democracy Party, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that was read out to the audience, and opening remarks from US Ambassador Derek Mitchell.

Ambassador Mitchell applauded the inclusiveness of the conference and stated, "I see in this room the best hope for this country. You come from all corners of the country, young and old, men and women, from all religious and ethnic backgrounds. None of you cares about your differences.” The conference sessions covered an array of topics related to disability rights and promoted the adoption of a national level disability law that is in line with the CRPD. On day three of the conference, participants voted for representatives of the newly formed Myanmar Council of Persons with Disabilities.
USICD welcomes the appointment of Yadana Aung as the chairwoman, and congratulates all of the Council members. Next month's newsletter will provide an in-depth article about the conference and the current status of disability issues in Myanmar.

**USICD Members Attend UN Meeting**

In June 2014, USICD was thrilled to sponsor several members to attend the UN Conference of States Parties in New York City. Below are three accounts of the experience our members had at the conference. A few of our Youth in International Development and Affairs (YIDA) interns were able to attend through their host organizations as well, you can read their accounts at https://usicd.wordpress.com/tag/cosp/.

While this was the 7th conference of the States Parties for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it was my first time attending this conference. From the moment I entered the buildings of the UN I was swept into the intense energy in the main room, of countries one after another, that have ratified the CRPD detailing the progress they have made and challenges in need of surmounting and the concurrent non-stop side events held in several separate rooms. These five days of sharing results, programing ideas and networking gave me an honest to goodness sense of the gathered momentum finally needed to slip off the gloves of the outdated charity and medical methods so long used when considering someone with a disability. It was exhilarating and motivating to be among so many people that extended their bare hands across the table in the spirit of collaboration to include everyone in a developing and thriving society. My hope is the United States can soon join this movement.

-Candace Cable, Paralympian

I attended the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD as a member of USICD. As a Handicap International (HI) consultant, I interviewed Risnawati (Risna) Utami, who founded Ohana, an HI partner organization. She shared stories about her schooling in Indonesia and the United States, in which each school provided vastly different experiences. In Indonesia she crawled up and down four flights of stairs to reach her classes, whereas Brandies University gave her an accessible van, in which she said, "I felt like a real human being." As Indonesia has already ratified the CRPD, she and other countries are looking to the United States to ratify, as "the U.S. is the pioneer of implementing the CRPD principles" and has success stories that "should be shared with the world." As I left the conference, I was thinking that as more countries ratify the CRPD without the United States, we lose our credibility as a leader of disability rights. As Risna said, "the United States should ratify the CRPD this year!"

-Rebecca Berman
The UN Conference of States Parties meetings I attended last week at the United Nations in NY urged disability goals integration into the post-2015 development agenda (newly released Zero Draft report) that has 'poverty eradication' as the driver umbrella goal for 2015-30. The WL chart reflects that 1 billion people with disabilities around the globe (80% in developing countries) are the 'poorest of the poor'. Education, healthcare, and employment access barriers are among the determinants along with cultural stigma. CRPD, ratified by 147 countries and with people with disabilities' organizations (DPOs) in strong leadership, is beginning to make a difference and shift governments' attention to shaping systems change through national disability plans.

- Evelyn Cherow

Global Disability Rights Library (GDRL)

Representatives from Challenge Your Disability Initiative (CYDI) in Nigeria Visit USICD

Two visitors representing a Global Disability Rights Library (GDRL) deployment site, Challenge Your Disability Initiative (CYDI) in Bauchi State, Nigeria, came to USICD's office in late September to exchange news on their recent activities. Doctors Balogun Israel Adekunkle and Abiodun Hauwa Isa Yuguda first attended the United Nations High Level Meeting on disability, and then came to Washington, D.C., in part to visit USICD.

They reported that CYDI has been using their eGranary Digital Library as a tool for teaching students at a local inclusive school. They also have made their eGranary open to members of the general public, including students at various local universities. They had intended to organize a regional workshop for people with disabilities on leadership and capacity building. However, local security challenges have forced them to temporarily postpone the workshop. This workshop would have used materials from the GDRL collection in their eGranary. Now that calm has returned to their country, Doctors Adekunkle and Yuguda plan to provide the workshop soon.

In other news, CYDI representatives reported that they have succeeded in developing a bill to promote the rights of people with disabilities and creating an agency for them. The bill has been passed into law; the agency has been inaugurated and is now operational. The visitors stated that the law has led to a paradigm shift in the attitudes of people with disabilities, their families and general society toward the community's issues. This cohort is now included in state development programs. Some have now received scholarships to study abroad toward undergraduate degrees for the first time in the history of the state. CYDI also helped secure a four percent quota on jobs in the state-level government for people with disabilities. The CYDI representatives also told USICD that they were the first organization to organize a regional conference raising awareness about HIV/AIDS among people with disabilities in Nigeria.

USICD Hosts Visitor for Uganda

Richard Mukaga, who works at Cheshire Services Uganda, visited the USICD office in late October to meet with USICD Program Manager Andrea Shettle. He was in the United States to participate in the 2013 Human Rights Advocacy Program at Columbia University in New York.

Cheshire Services Uganda is one of the deployment sites for the Global Disability Rights Library (GDRL). Richard Mukaga stated that his organization
had provided training in basic computer skills to people from various organizations and schools in their local community. They also provided training in how to use the off-line eGranary Digital Library which contains the full GDRL collection of digital materials on disability rights topics. Their eGranary is being actively used by students at various universities for school work and also by members of the disability community, who use it to educate themselves about disability rights issues.

Richard Mukaga stated that Cheshire Services Uganda hopes to someday forge a partnership with an international organization to provide more training in CRPD implementation to the local disability community in Uganda.

Bangladesh Making the Most of the GDRL!

Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organization (BERDO), Rupnagar, Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh has been going strong! A GDRL deployment site, BERDO also has a collection of print books, Braille books, and talking books for blind users. About 15 to 20 blind students use BERDO’s library each day.

BERDO also has offered a scholarship to enable blind students to pursue computer training.
In addition, during the past year, BERDO’s job creation project has created about 80 jobs among people with disabilities as well as trained 10 teachers at 8 community schools in how to be more disability inclusive in their classrooms.

GDRL Site in Peru Visited by Canadian Ambassador

Centro Ann Sullivan del Peru, a Global Disability Rights Library deployment site, recently received a visit from the Canadian Ambassador to Peru, Patricia Fortier. This visit recognizes CASP’s 34 years of work dedicated to educating people with disabilities, as well as a 24-year friendship between CASP and Canada. During the visit, Ambassador Fortier donated computer equipment on behalf of the Canadian Embassy in Peru. All CASP students will be able to use this equipment to learn how to operate a computer and access new sources of knowledge.

CASP, founded in 1979, today assists more than 450 students with disabilities. It is recognized worldwide as a model center of training, demonstration, and research for people with autism, intellectual disabilities, Down Syndrome, and cerebral palsy, and their families. The government of Panama has borrowed from the Peruvian model in founding the Ann Sullivan Centro de Panamá (CASPAN).
Youth in International Development and Affairs (YIDA) Internship Program

For the second year, USICD brought a cohort of students and graduates with disabilities aspiring to careers in international development to Washington DC for the summer to complete internships in various international organizations in the DC area. The Youth in International Development and Affairs (YIDA) internship program was launched last year with the support of the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF). The 2014 program was made possible with continued funding from MEAF. A new supplemental grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation enabled USICD to expand its cohort from seven interns in 2013 to eight interns in 2014—and also provide financial support to an intern who needed to bring a personal care assistant with her to DC. The eight interns in 2014 were: Kathryn Carroll, Vivian Fridas, Theophilus Worjlog Jlateh, Lindsay Lee, Diego Mariscal, Maegan Shanks, Erum Siddiqui, Daniel Van Sant. Participating host organizations in 2014 were: Burton Blatt Institute, Human Rights Watch, Inter-American Development Bank, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Management Sciences for Health, Medical Corps, National Democratic Institute, and World Learning.
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BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

Marca Bristo – President
Marca Bristo is President of Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago, a leading disability rights organization. She has received numerous awards, including the Americans with Disabilities Act Award in recognition of her contribution to creating and passing the law.

Lex Frieden – Vice President
Lex Frieden is a professor at the Texas Institute for Rehabilitation and Research. He has been a leader in the independent living movement since the 1970s and has received two Presidential Citations for his work in the disability field.

John Lancaster – Past President
John Lancaster is a former Executive Director of the National Council on Independent Living. He has played a significant role in developing disability laws and policies in the United States and has provided technical assistance to disability programs in Vietnam.

Barbara LeRoy – Secretary
Barbara LeRoy is a professor at the Developmental Disabilities Institute at Wayne State University in Detroit. She is a disability consultant to the Ministries of Education in New Zealand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

Jeff Rosen – Treasurer
Jeff Rosen is General Counsel for ZVRS. For seven years, he was the General Counsel and Director of Policy for the National Council on Disability and now serves as their Chairman.

Tony Coelho
Tony Coelho is Chair of Life without Limits. A former congressman, Coelho authored the Americans with Disabilities Act.
Jill Houghton
Jill Houghton is the Executive Director of the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) and most recently served as the Executive Director of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel.

David Hutt
David Hutt is senior staff attorney at the National Disability Rights Network, which promotes equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. He has provided training in employment law and rehabilitation issues and works on issues related to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Pat Morrissey
Patricia Morrissey was a member of the U.S. Delegation to a United Nations Committee that drafted the CRPD. She was Commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) from August 2001 till January 2009.

David W. Oaks
David Oaks is the Executive Director of MindFreedom International. For the past quarter century, he has advocated for improvements in the mental health system, including better human rights protections for psychiatric survivors.

Stephanie Ortoleva
Stephanie Ortoleva is Senior Human Rights Legal Advisor at BlueLaw, International, LLP, where she focuses on disability rights and human rights programming in developing countries. She is an Associate of the American University Center for Global Peace.

Eric Rosenthal
Eric Rosenthal is the founder and Executive Director of Disability Rights International, which has exposed—and ended—human rights atrocities inside institutions for people with mental disabilities internationally. The American Association of People with Disabilities credits his role with DRI as one influencing factor that led to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Randy Rutta
Randy Rutta is Executive Vice President of Public Affairs at Easter Seals, Inc. He has been a key leader in advocating for making transportation systems more accessible to people with disabilities.

Diana Samarasan
Diana Samarasan is the director of the Disability Rights Fund, which gives grants to disabled people’s organizations in developing countries that are advocating for improved implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She has been active for 12 years in the fields of disability, international health, and human rights.

Betsy Valnes
Betsy Valnes is the Executive Director of the National Youth Leadership Network. She has been a contributing member of the disability community since 1991, serving as a self-advocate, an activist, a support person, a community development professional, and a policy making contributor. Her Master’s studies focused on international human rights laws/initiatives for marginalized communities and the roles of individual people in such progressive movements.

Audrey Webson
Audrey Webson is the director of Perkins International. He has served in various capacities with several international organizations including: Sightsavers International UK, Helen Keller International NY, and the World Blind Union. He has written policy papers on inclusive education for the World Bank and has led social analysis initiatives for the Danish government.
**Glen White**
Glen White is Director of the Research and Training Center on Independent Living at the University of Kansas and has worked in the field of rehabilitation and independent living for more than 30 years. Most recently, has conducted research and training in supportive entrepreneurship in Peru.

**Tom Zampieri**
Tom Zampieri is the National Director of Government Relations for the Blind Veterans of America and worked in health care for 25 years. His work has resulted in the expansion of the VA Continuum of Care for blind and low vision veterans’ outpatient programs opening 55 new programs with 237 employees.

**Government Representatives (Non-voting)**

**David Baquis**
David Baquis is an Accessibility Specialist in the Access Board's Office of Technical and Information Services. David comes to the Access Board from SHHH (Self Help for Hard of Hearing People) where he served as Director of the National Center on Assistive Technology.

**Meredith DeDonna**
Meredith DeDonna is a Program Specialist in the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the Department of Labor.

**Joan Durocher**
Joan Durocher is General Counsel and Director of Policy to the National Council on Disability. She has served NCD for over nine years, including as Senior Attorney Advisor for the last several years.

**Marcie Roth**
Marcie Roth is the Director of the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) leading the national transformation towards integrating the access and functional needs of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of whole community emergency and disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. She is known for her 30 years of leadership in developing and managing effective coalitions to advance disability inclusive policy initiatives.

**Sue Swenson**
Sue Swenson is deputy assistant secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the US Department of Education. She is the mother of three adult sons, one of whom has disabilities.
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