LEARNING FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PROCESSES
Learning from Civil Society Engagement in other International Human Rights Processes
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TINA MINKOWITZ
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CRPD negotiations — Nothing about us without us!

Tina Minkowitz
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Experience

- Represented World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP) in Ad Hoc Committee (body of the UN General Assembly that negotiated CRPD)
- One of the core disabled people’s organizations (DPOs)
- Transformative experience both personally and politically
How did we organize?

- Started with nucleus of DPOs – International Disability Alliance of 7 global disability organizations, mostly DPOs
- Constituency-based – WNUSP, World Blind Union, etc.
- Added regional constituencies, allied NGOs, women, indigenous people, etc. to create Steering Committee of International Disability Caucus
- IDC open to all DPOs, PWD on government delegations, and allied NGOs, based on principle of DPO leadership
- Steering Committee members led working groups in topic areas and had final say on positions based on constituencies’ self-representation
- Allied NGOs played a supportive role and did not contradict DPO leadership
How did we influence the outcome?

• Key decision made by Ad Hoc Committee in second meeting, to establish drafting group that was based on constituencies
  • Satisfied states – 27 delegations on regional basis
  • Satisfied NGOs – 12 NGOs selected by IDC (IDA organizations + 5 regions)
    • 1 NHRI included
    • All had equal role, except that only states facilitated informals
• Prior to that, many NGOs as well as states submitted text proposals
• NGOs on drafting group coalesced to learn and understand each other’s positions (almost the same group was IDC steering committee, so carried over into later stages)
How did we influence the outcome? 2

- In later stages of the Ad Hoc Committee as the negotiations proceeded:
  - Prior to each session we submitted joint comments with our preferred text on each article and arguments for it
  - Daily newsletter that reflected on previous day and highlighted our priorities for day ahead
Lessons

• DPO leadership present and strong from beginning, dictated the structure and functioning of civil society in relation to the process and in our internal relations
  • States needed us and respected our expertise as well as our political role legitimizing process and outcome

• Having the concrete focus of an outcome in which we all had a stake promoted cooperation and win/win solutions based on mutual respect
  • We had our non-negotiables as DPOs and exerted our influence collectively when it was called for
  • Creative solutions to conflict or divergence of interests among DPOs
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2020 Webinar Series

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD