



August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Canadian  
Association of  
Broadcasters

**Via Email**

L'Association  
canadienne des  
radiodiffuseurs

Ms. Diane Rhéaume  
Secretary-General  
Canadian Radio-television and  
Telecommunications Commission  
1, Promenade du Portage  
Gatineau, Québec  
K1A 0N2

Dear Ms. Rhéaume:

**RE: Reflection of Persons with Disabilities – Broadcasting Public  
Notice CRTC 2004 - 2 *Introduction to Broadcasting Decisions  
CRTC 2004-6 to 2004-27 renewing the licences of 22 specialty  
services***

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) – the national voice of Canada's private broadcasters, representing the vast majority of Canadian programming services, including private television and radio stations, networks and specialty, pay and pay-per-view televisions services – is pleased to present its Action Plan for examining issues concerning the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming, in response to the above-noted proceeding.

Attached is a copy of the CAB's action plan.

Sincerely,

Glenn O'Farrell  
President and CEO

**A Submission to the Canadian Radio-television and  
Telecommunications Commission**

**With respect to**

**Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004-2 - *Introduction to Broadcasting  
Decisions CRTC 2004-6 to 2004-27 renewing the licences of 22 specialty  
services***

**Prepared by**



---

Canadian Association of Broadcasters  
L'Association canadienne des radiodiffuseurs

---

**August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

**Table of Contents**

Introduction..... 2

The CAB's Process..... 2

Overview of Disability Issues..... 3

The Economic Reality of Persons with Disabilities ..... 7

Barriers to Participation in Society..... 7

Issues Specific to Television Broadcasting..... 9

    Participation ..... 9

    Employment..... 9

    Portrayal..... 12

The CAB's Approach ..... 14

    A Steering Committee from JSIC..... 14

    The Outreach Committee..... 14

    Statistical Research..... 14

    CAB Research Strategy ..... 15

    Possible Products and Deliverables ..... 17

Workplan..... 19

Time Lines ..... 20

Appendix I - List of Persons Consulted..... 21

Appendix II - Questions for CAB Consultations..... 22

    Employment practices..... 22

    Portrayal..... 22

## **Introduction**

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) – the national voice of Canada's private broadcasters, representing the vast majority of Canadian programming services, including private television and radio stations, networks and specialty, pay and pay-per-view televisions services – is pleased to present its Action Plan for examining issues concerning the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming, in response to Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004-2 Introduction to Broadcasting Decisions CRTC 200-6 to 2004-27 renewing the licences of 22 specialty services (PN 2004-2).

In PN 2004-2, which introduced the decisions renewing the licences of 22 specialty services originally licensed in 1996, the Commission addressed a number of issues concerning these services in general. Among the issues raised was the question of the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming. These issues had been raised by several intervenors at the hearing and discussed with the CAB during its intervention. In PN 2004-2, the Commission requested that the CAB develop and file a plan outlining the process it would propose to examine these issues.

## **The CAB's Process**

The CAB's Joint Societal Issues Committee (JSIC) brings together members from all sectors of the broadcasting industry – radio, television and pay and specialty services – to deal with social policy issues that affect the industry. JSIC is mandated by the CAB membership to prepare recommendations and approaches on such issues for presentation to the CAB's Board of Directors. It is also responsible for the preparation and review of industry codes as well as assisting broadcasters in meeting their obligations with respect to social policy issues.

Two members of the JSIC, its Chair, Rita Cugini, Vice-President Regulatory Affairs and Business Development of Alliance Atlantis Broadcasting, and member, Valerie Morrissette, Vice-President of Human Resources for Pelmorex Inc. were mandated by the JSIC to undertake preliminary consultations with national associations representing persons with disabilities and other interested stakeholders in order to gain a better understanding of the issues prior to the development of the CAB Action Plan.

A number of formal and less formal consultations were held with a wide range of representatives from various disability communities. Two round tables were held, one in Ottawa at the CAB's offices and one in Toronto at the offices of the Weather Network. In addition, a number of single consultations with groups unable to attend the roundtables were held. A list of the various parties consulted is attached as Appendix I. In preparation for the consultations, the CAB forwarded background material and a number of questions to the participants. These questions are included as Appendix II.

The CAB would like to thank the Office of Disability Issues of Social Development Canada (ODI) as well as the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) for their

guidance in selecting associations to consult. The CAB recognizes that its consultations were not exhaustive but believes them sufficiently comprehensive to allow it to develop its Action Plan. The CAB would also like to express its appreciation to the many people who attended our formal and informal consultations.

## **Overview of Disability Issues**

Disability is not easily defined, nor is the collective of data on disability straightforward. In Canada, people are considered to have a disability if their condition restricts their ability to perform common activities such as working, going to school, travelling, communicating or performing daily tasks at home. Over the years the definition has changed and, along with it, so too has the perception of disability changed within Canadian society. At present, many observers have adopted the view that persons with disabilities are restricted in performing daily activities because of a complex environment with some elements related to the person and others to social and political context.

One issue in the collection of data on persons with disabilities is that most of the statistics come from self-identification, which may result in some under-reporting. For example, persons with hearing loss or arthritis may not identify this as a disability. In other cases, a person living with a disability may not want to self-identify to an employer, fearing possible consequences for their employment status or career development.

In 2001, the Government of Canada sponsored a national survey of persons with disabilities in Canada – the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS)<sup>1</sup> focusing on Canadians who have an activity limitation or a participation restriction associated with a physical or mental condition or health problem. PALS considers people to have a disability if they have a physical or mental condition or a health problem that restricts their ability to perform activities that are normal for their age.

The Study provides a wide range of information on persons with disabilities in Canada and serves as the basis for some of the data in this section. PALS demonstrates the diversity of the disabled community in Canada and some of the challenges faced by persons living with disabilities.

With reference to the many kinds of disability that are experienced by Canadians, PALS outlined 5 types for children under the age of 5, 10 types for children aged 5-14 and 11 for adults (15 years of age and older). The total number of 11 for adults is made up of the following categories of reported disabilities:

---

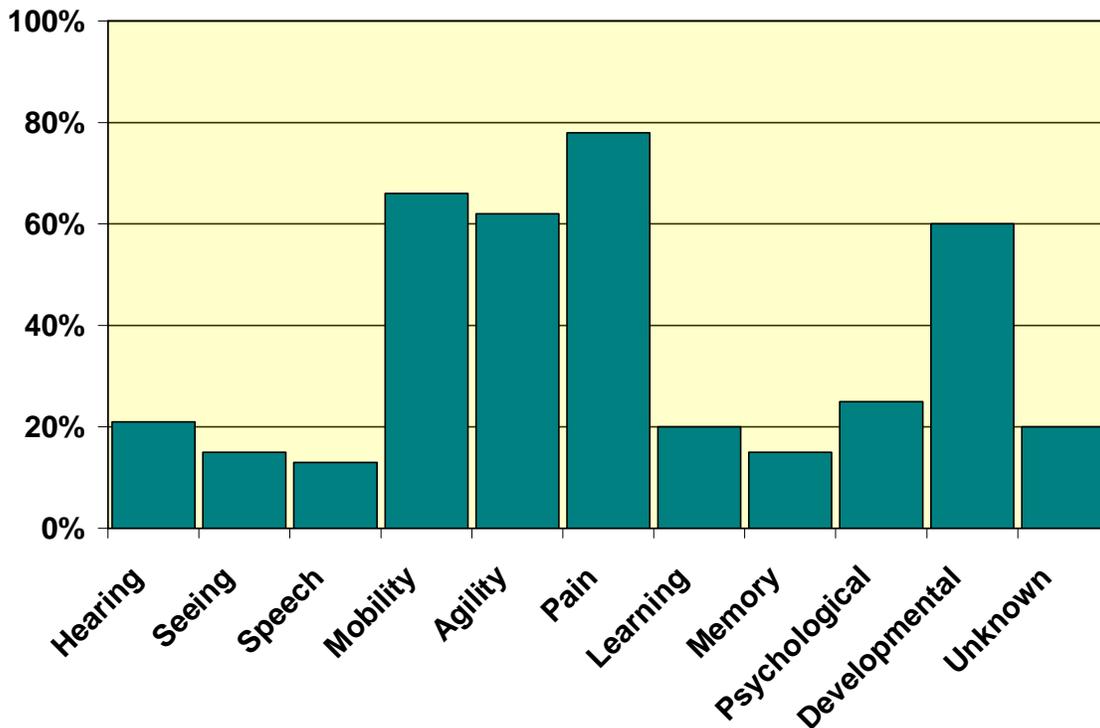
<sup>1</sup> The complete report *Disability in Canada: A 2001 Profile* can be found at the website of Social Development Canada's Office of Disability Issues - <http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/odi/documents/PALS/PALS000.shtml&hs=pyp>

**CAB's Action Plan to Examine Issues Concerning the Presence, Portrayal and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Television Programming – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

- Hearing (21%)
- Seeing (15%)
- Speech (13%)
- Mobility (66%)
- Agility (62%)
- Pain (78%)
- Learning (20%)
- Memory (15%)
- Psychological (25%)
- Developmental (6%) and
- Unknown (2%)

The numbers in brackets represent the percentage of adults 25-54 who reported the particular type of disability. The numbers do not add to 100% since respondents could include more than one type.

**Graph 1: Percentage of Specific Types of Disabilities Among People with Disabilities in Canada**



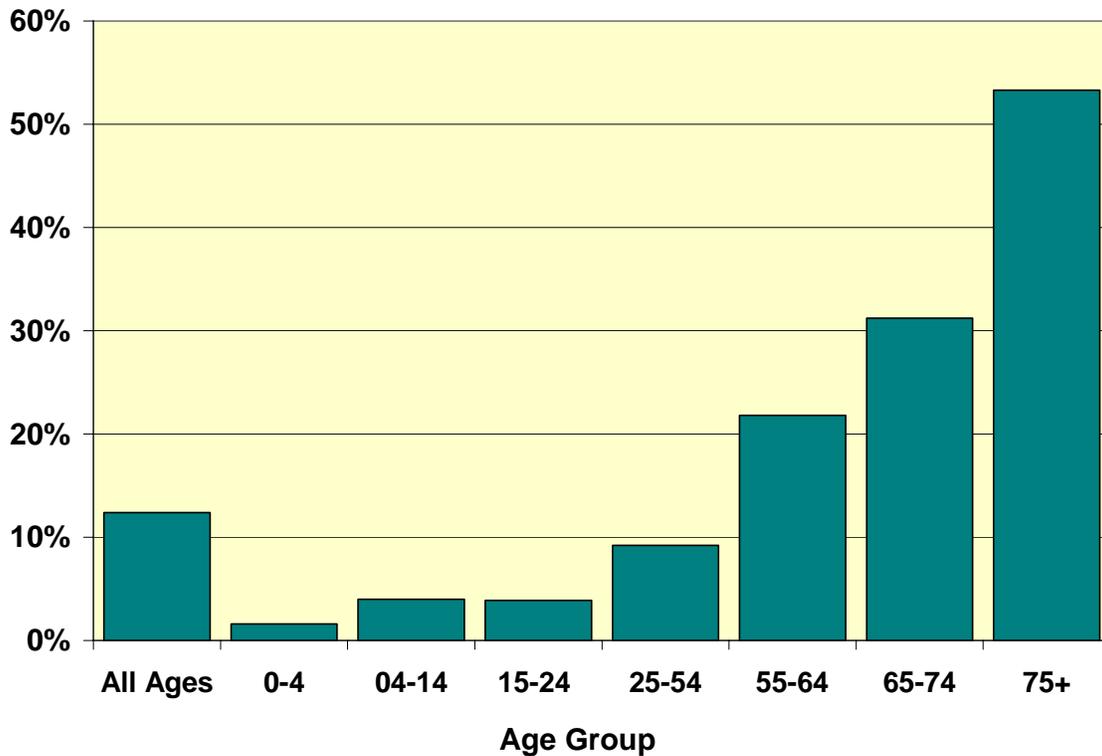
PALS provided a variety of population and demographic statistics about persons with disabilities, including the overall Canadian population, various age groups and other demographic data. The chart below shows the percentages of various demographic groups who report disabilities of one kind or another.

**Table 1: Statistical Profile of Persons with Disabilities**

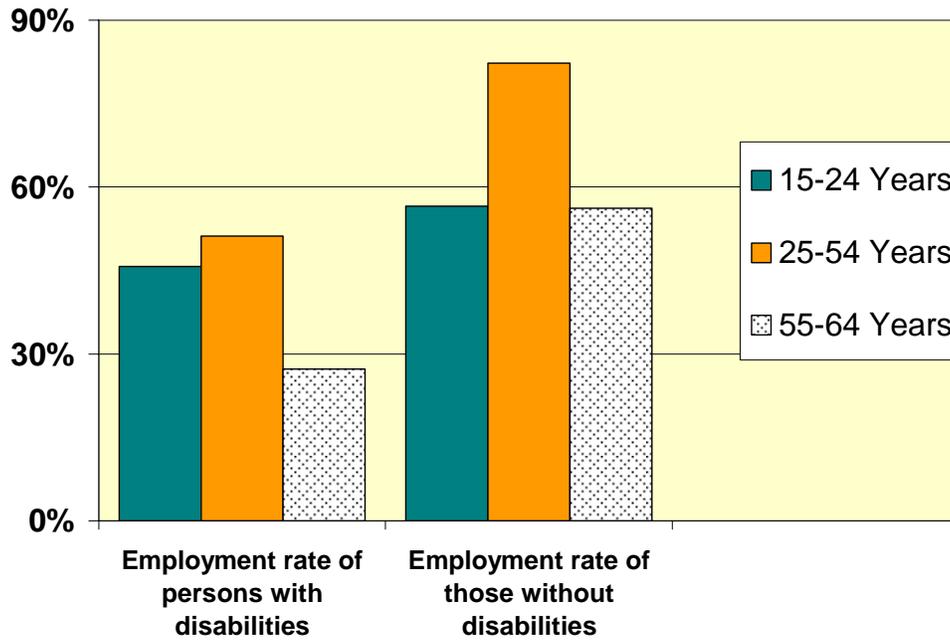
Demographic Group	% with disabilities	Employment rate of persons with disabilities	Household Income* As a percentage of those without disabilities
All Canadians	12.4%	NA	NA
0-4	1.6%	NA	86.2%
5-14	4.0%	NA	91.8 %
15-24	3.9%	45.7% (verses 56.6% for those without disabilities)	92.8 %
25-54	9.2%	51.2% (verses 82.3% for those without disabilities)	72.4%
55-64	21.8%	27.3% (verses 56.2% for those without disabilities)	73.0%
65-74	31.2%	NA	105.6%
75+	53.3%	NA	98.8%

\*where at least one person who is earning income has a disability

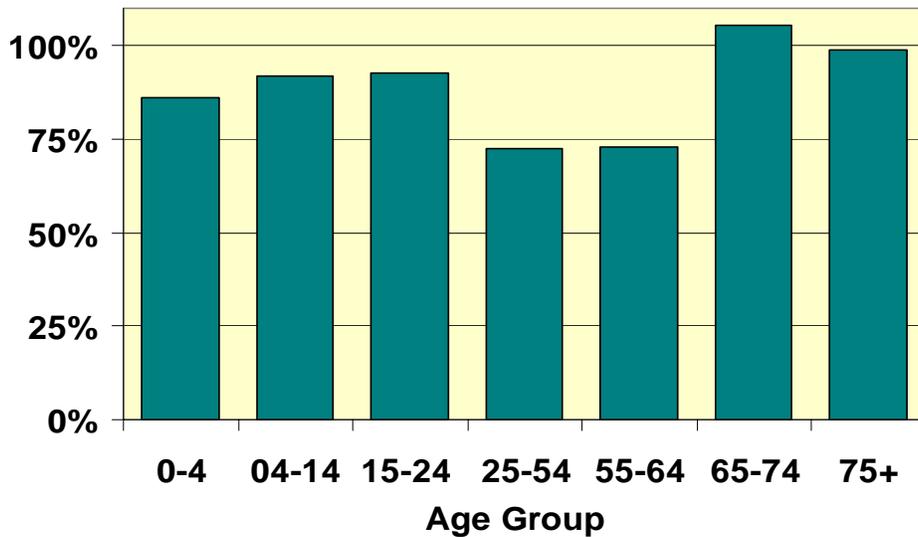
**Graph 2: Percentage of People with Disabilities in Canada**



**Graph 3: Employment Rate of Persons with Disabilities Verses those without Disabilities**



**Graph 4: Income of People with Disabilities as a Percentage of those without Disabilities**



In 2002, the Government of Canada released another report, “Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities” which reported on many of the statistics from PALS and included some additional statistical information. The report noted that among Aboriginal people in Canada 15 years and older, the rate of disability was approximately 31%, more than double the rate in the overall population.

Employment equity legislation recognizes four designated groups – women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities and persons with disabilities. It is worth noting that persons with disabilities can equally belong to one, or even two, of the other designated groups. Unfortunately, programs or initiatives targeted at one designated group may not take into account the potential for multiple representations across these groups. For example, while programs may be developed for Aboriginal women, it is not always guaranteed that they will take into account Aboriginal women who have disabilities.

## **The Economic Reality of Persons with Disabilities**

As demonstrated in Table 1, persons with disabilities often have lower participation rates and lower incomes than the rest of Canadian society. In the core working demographic of 25-54, for example, the numbers of people not in the labour force is much higher than that of Canadians without disabilities. In addition, the unemployment rate of people in the workforce is higher for those who have disabilities.

The household income of persons with disabilities is also significantly lower than that of persons without disabilities. This can be explained in part by the lower participation rates in the job market. However, many persons with disabilities are concerned about **underemployment** as well, where they are employed in positions that do not take full advantage of their skills and abilities. In addition, PALS indicates that the education levels in the 25-54 age group are lower for persons with disabilities.

While 18% of persons without disabilities aged 25-54 have less than a high school education, this number rises to 30% for persons with disability. Conversely the numbers with university degrees are 14% for persons with disabilities as compared to 25% for those without disabilities.

## **Barriers to Participation in Society**

Through the course of its consultations, many representatives of disability associations told the CAB that the low level of participation among persons with disabilities in certain industries could in part be attributed to the guidance offered to students within the school systems. For example, students with disabilities often are not encouraged to pursue a career in broadcasting or related fields.

Clearly, there are many factors that may block full participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of endeavour including:

- Access – As one of the people we consulted stated, “access is more than parking and toilets”. Too narrow hallways, lack of Braille in elevators and lack of interpretation are but a few examples of obstacles that can prevent persons with disabilities from having access to the places that others can go easily.
- Accommodation – Once a person with a disability gets to the place they want to go, and in particular, where they want to work, there is also the challenge of accommodation. The needs for accommodation range from the fairly minor, such

**CAB's Action Plan to Examine Issues Concerning the Presence, Portrayal and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Television Programming – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

as a wider doorway to an office, special software to facilitate computer use, a TTY for the participation of deaf employees in messaging with colleagues, clients and others to more demanding, such as full-time assistance for a quadriplegic such as recently-elected Member of Parliament, Steve Fletcher.

- Stigmatization – Many persons with disabilities are reluctant to be candid about their disability for fear they will be viewed as an object of pity, as someone unable to meet a job requirement or in some other inaccurate and unfair manner. This is even more prevalent among persons with psychiatric disabilities, learning disabilities or developmental disabilities, which tend to have more negative attitudes attached to them. A corollary is that successful people with these disabilities are not always “known” to their community, which makes the development of role models more difficult.
- Stereotyping – Stereotyping occurs when all persons with disabilities are depicted as having the same attributes and characteristics. For example, depictions of persons with disabilities often tend to focus on the disability and do not portray persons with disabilities as full people with lives like everyone else.
- Medicalization – Many persons with disability report that their lives are seen through a medical lens – that something is “wrong” with them and needs to be fixed. This creates a false perception that persons with disabilities are dependent and/or passive and thus unable to live normal and productive lives.
- Poverty –Persons with disabilities in all age groups, with the exception of persons recently retired (65-74 years of age), have considerably lower household incomes than the general public. This results from the higher rates of unemployment, underemployment and non-participation in the work force as well as the lower educational levels of persons with disabilities. PALS also clearly demonstrates that the economic position of women living with a disability is worse than that of men.
- Marginalization – With lower incomes and problems of transportation, stigmatization, access and accommodation, persons with disabilities are less visible in our society, particularly in the everyday spheres of work, social activities and, consequently, in the media.

## Issues Specific to Television Broadcasting

### *Participation*

The CAB's consultations identified three key barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in the broadcasting industry:

- Accessibility to broadcasters' and producers' premises – While most buildings now provide accessible parking and bathroom access, there are still a number of limitations to gaining access to these premises. If doorways to studios are not wide enough, those in wheelchairs may not be able to participate in radio or television studio discussions and other activities that traditionally take place on these premises. For example, one participant in the CAB's consultations, an accomplished actor with a long list of credits, told us of being unable to go to casting calls because the production location was not accessible. Moreover, if scripts and other source materials are not provided in alternative formats, actors with visual impairments will not have access to audition materials in a timely fashion.
- Access to captions and described video – While the CAB notes that there are other on-going processes to address captioning and described video, issues relating to the use of equipment remain a concern. For example, persons with visual impairment who want to access the SAP channel may find this task prohibitive depending on the set and its functionality.
- Accessibility to broadcasters and public processes – Many of the disability organizations are relatively poorly funded. Moreover, individuals within the disabled community do not have the knowledge or resources to provide input to broadcasters, regulators, or the government in public processes. In addition, few broadcasters have regular mechanisms in place to receive feedback from disability communities – whether through their editorial boards or advisory groups.

### *Employment*

In June of 2004, Women in Film and Television – Toronto (WIFT-T) released a report entitled *Framework: Employment in Canadian Screen-Based Media – a National Profile* (WIFT Framework). The survey provides a wealth of information concerning employment levels for the four designated employment equity groups in Canadian television, film and TV production, new media and related fields. It also provides information on the profile of the teachers, students and graduates of various media schools, including broadcast (or radio and television) arts. While there is more information provided on the roles of women, there is ample information on the participation of persons with disabilities.

PALS indicates that persons with disabilities make up approximately 12.8% of the Canadian population, 9.2% of the core working demographic of 25 to 54 year olds and 21.8% of the older people of working age (54-65). According to the statistics provided in the WIFT Framework, the representation of persons with disabilities in the workforce is

**CAB's Action Plan to Examine Issues Concerning the Presence, Portrayal and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Television Programming – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

5.6%. The representation of persons with disabilities is lower than their presence in the workforce when we look at all companies that fall under the *Employment Equity Act*, at 2.3%.

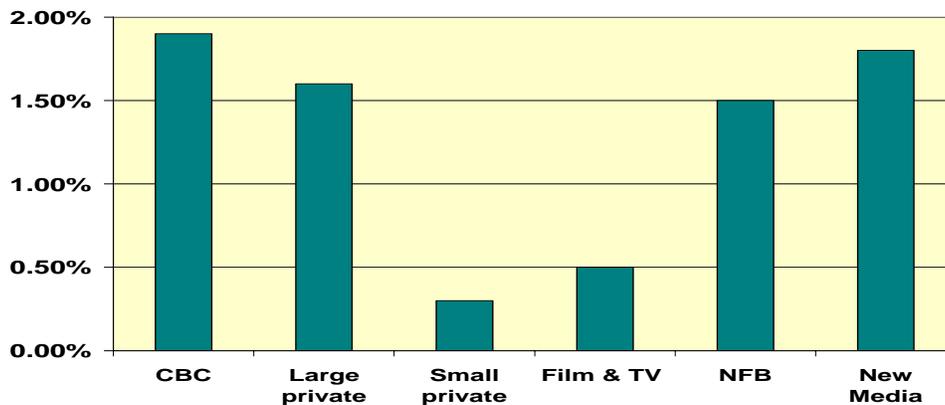
The participation of persons with disabilities in broadcasting, film and television production and other screen-based media is even lower than their representation in the workforce. The chart below is a regrouping of information provided in a number of charts from the WIFT Framework.

**Table 2: Representation of Persons with Disabilities in the Workforces of Various Components of Screen-Based Media 2001**

<b>Employer</b>	<b>% of Persons with Disabilities</b>
CBC-Radio Canada	1.9%
Large private broadcasters	1.6%
Small private broadcasters *	0.3%
Film and television production – employee identified	0.5%
National Film Board of Canada	1.5%
New Media – paid employees	1.8%

\*WIFT-T's data sources were taken from publicly available Employment Equity data, obtained from HRSD (CANADA), plus Census 2001 data. Small private broadcaster data came from the CRTC which is derived from unaudited annual return information, and includes all broadcast licensees, radio, television and BDUs. Due to concerns regarding the reliability of CRTC data, the number here is an average of 2002-03.

**Graph 5: Representation of Persons with Disabilities in the Workforces of Various Components of Screen-Based Media 2001**



It should be noted that the only area of the media where the representation of persons with disabilities starts to approach their representation in the workforce is in the new media sector. Persons with disabilities comprise 4.6% of the workforce in the free-lance division of the new media sector. In fact, persons with disabilities had significant representation in some of the higher salaried positions including 9.1% of other technical employees, 6.3% of programmers and 5.7% of creative directors. In addition, persons

**CAB's Action Plan to Examine Issues Concerning the Presence, Portrayal and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Television Programming – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

with disabilities fared well in medium salaried positions representing, for example, 10% of the writer-researchers.

Most employers identified workforce shortages in a wide variety of skilled positions in all areas of screen-based media. This could represent good news to the designated groups as employers will need to take a wider view of whom they want to employ in order to ensure tomorrow's workforce. However, in order to be employed in a skilled position, both training and experience are required. The WIFT Framework's review of broadcasting and other training schools indicates that persons with disabilities are under-represented.

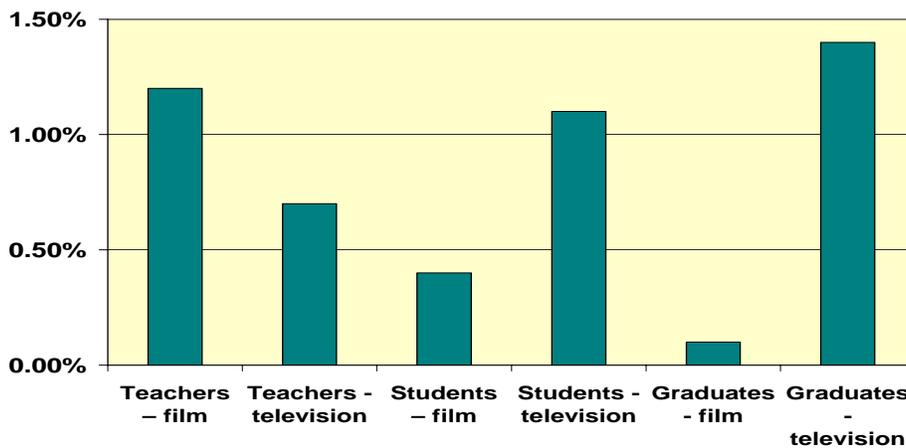
Table 3 demonstrates the participation rates in both broadcast studies and film and television production schools across the country.

**Table 3: Representation of persons with disabilities in various roles in post-secondary institutions for the school year 2002-2003**

<b>Post-secondary role</b>	<b>% of Persons with Disabilities</b>
Teachers – film	1.2%
Teachers - television	0.7%
Students – film	0.4%
Students - television	1.1%
Graduates - film	0.1%
Graduates - television	1.4%

Source: WIFT-T Survey of Education and Training Institutions, 2003/4, and 2001 Census.

**Graph 6: Representation of persons with disabilities in various roles in post-secondary institutions for the school year 2002-2003**



While the percentage of persons with disabilities is somewhat lower among younger people than in the population in general, these statistics are disquieting since they indicate

that the labour pool from which broadcasters and producers will draw in the future is small, in some cases lower than the representation in the broadcast television workforce.

The CAB does not have access to statistics on the participation of persons with disabilities in theatre schools or young theatre companies. However, during our consultations it was suggested that young people with disabilities are not encouraged to seek out roles in school plays. One participant noted that most drama teachers could not envisage Hamlet in a wheelchair. Theatre in the schools is where people generally “catch the bug” for acting and go on to pursue more advanced training. If this is not seen as a viable possibility for young people with disabilities, the talent pool available to television and film producers will be limited.

The CAB notes that some broadcasters have developed initiatives to encourage the participation of persons with disabilities in their workforces. The following are a few examples:

- *PROJECTIONS: Abilities International Disability Film Festival* was held on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 showcasing works produced, directed, written or performed by persons with a disability. Sponsored by a number of broadcasters, Projections was the first international disability film festival established in Canada.
- Global Television Network offers an annual Scholarship-Internship Award to a Canadian with a Physical Disability. This award, valued at \$15,000 provides educational assistance for one full scholastic year of a radio and television arts program or journalism program, as well as a challenging opportunity to work in private television, in pursuit of a career in broadcasting.

Despite these efforts, the participation rates in our industry remain low. Since the numbers come from self-identification, it is possible that the actual participation levels are somewhat higher but it is clear that additional efforts must be deployed to ensure a greater presence of persons with disabilities in the broadcasting workforce.

### ***Portrayal***

Our consultations and a review of literature revealed a wide range of concerns about the representation, reflection and portrayal of persons with disabilities in television programming.

- *Presence* – Persons with disabilities represent a significant percentage of our society, however, they are not seen frequently in television programming. While persons with disabilities are rarely cast in leading roles, they are not even seen in minor roles e.g. supporting characters or as extras in crowd scenes. In reality, if persons with disabilities are represented at all they are often only seen in programs dealing specifically with disability.
- *Reflection* – During the CAB's consultations, many participants noted that when a person in a wheelchair is, for example, part of a news story, the first shot will

**CAB's Action Plan to Examine Issues Concerning the Presence, Portrayal and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Television Programming – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

likely be of the wheelchair not the person. In other words, the focus is on the disability and not the person.

- *Stereotyping* – There are a variety of ways that persons with disabilities can be stereotypically portrayed in the media including:
  - Portrayal of persons with disabilities as tragic and/or dependent.
  - Portrayal persons with disabilities as brave, courageous, fighting their way through life.
  - Portrayal of persons with disabilities as “super-hero” who has higher faculties somewhere else.
  - Insinuation that a person’s disability leads them to sinister or evil behaviour.
- *Misuse of Terms and Images* – Despite the fact that the Secretary of State published a booklet in 1985 entitled *A Way with Words and Images: Guidelines for the portrayal of persons with disabilities*, which outlined appropriate use of language and other aspects of portrayal, the media still too often use terms such as “confined to a wheelchair”, “stricken with deafness”, “suffers from blindness”. Misuse of terms or images can lead the reader, listener or viewer to improperly conclude that the life of a person with a disability is tragic or dependent.
- *Appropriation of Voice* – This concern was raised on a number of occasions during the CAB’s consultations. Writers, producers and directors who purport to tell stories involving persons with disabilities run the risk of misperception or stereotyping if they do not solicit proper input from members of disability communities. Similarly, actors with disabilities find it particularly galling that persons with disabilities are, more often than not, portrayed on television by able-bodied performers. One person we consulted noted that it would no longer be acceptable for white performers to wear “black face” to portray Canadians of African descent but it still seems acceptable for able-bodied performers to portray persons with disabilities.
- *Unbalanced or Inaccurate Reporting of Issues Concerning Persons with Disabilities* – During its consultations, the CAB also learned that many members of disability communities continue to be concerned with news reporting that they feel ignores the perspective of persons with disabilities. For example, during the CAB’s consultations a number of participants expressed outrage that the coverage of the Latimer case seemed to be uniquely about the father and ignored the rights and concerns of the daughter, Tracey Latimer. While editorial boards often consult with representatives from a wide range of groups and communities, most disability groups feel that they are not regularly consulted.

The majority of the individuals the CAB consulted were uniformly of the opinion that the primary reason for the lack of sensitivity and understanding of the above-noted issues is that very few newsrooms, production studios, and/or programming teams include persons with disabilities. Some noted that the inclusion of journalists with disabilities on various editorial boards would ensure that issues are dealt with in a more inclusive manner.

## **The CAB's Approach**

The CAB believes that the media, and particularly television, can play a strong role in changing public perspective on social issues. Increased visibility, more accurate portrayal and positive messaging can all have a strong impact on forming more inclusive practices in all areas of society.

### ***A Steering Committee from JSIC***

The CAB believes it is important for senior broadcast executives to have an opportunity to meet with knowledgeable people from various disability communities in order to have a better understanding of the existing concerns and areas for advancement. Such contact will also ensure that senior levels of the industry will buy into the process and its outcomes.

For this reason, the CAB will create a subcommittee of the Joint Societal Issues Committee (JSIC). This Steering Committee will be a relatively small group of senior executives from the broadcasting industry who will oversee the implementation of the CAB's Action Plan and its report to the CRTC. Reporting to the JSIC as a whole, the Steering Committee will ensure a strong presence of the major broadcasters in the implementation of the CAB's Action Plan. All proposals will be vetted first by the JSIC, which will in turn make recommendations to the CAB's Television and Specialty & Pay Boards, ensuring that all members endorse the approach taken.

### ***The Outreach Committee***

The Steering Committee will approach a number of people to serve as an ongoing advisory group on the implementation of the CAB's work plan and proposals. We envisage including representatives from the independent production sector, industry guilds and/or trade associations, representatives from national disability organizations and others with expertise in issues related to disability and the media. These experts will be asked to provide feedback on various proposals put forward to advance the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities within the industry. The CAB's approach is aimed at a wider audience than just broadcasters. For this reason, the CAB believes that the inclusion of related industry associations and organizations in its Action Plan provides greater opportunities for partnering.

### ***Statistical Research***

It is clear from the statistics generated by WIFT-T and from PALS that the participation of persons with disabilities in the workforces of Canadian broadcasters is minimal. In

fact, the WIFT-T study clearly shows that while participation from other designated groups is lower than their overall participation in the workforce, the under-representation of persons with disabilities is still more pronounced. Moreover, the problem is even more acute when we consider the much lower rates of participation in the workforce and higher rates of unemployment among persons with disabilities.

This low level of employment in our industry inevitably results in much lower visibility of persons with disabilities on screen. It is interesting that this is not only true in broadcasting but also in film and television production.

One participant during the CAB's consultation provided an interesting illustration of how persons with disabilities are next to invisible in publicly funded documentaries. In 2002, Telefilm Canada's annual report included a list of all the documentaries it funded in that year along with a description of the documentary and an accompanying picture. Of the 246 documentaries in the catalogue with 460 photographs of people – in some cases more than one photo accompanied the description of the documentary - only 3 showed persons with disabilities, and one of these was a senior citizen who may or may not have had a disability\*. This is not meant as a scientific study – rather the point is that the publicly funded support mechanism for film has not provided significant support for films about persons with disabilities and has funded few, if any, films made by persons with disabilities.

For the reasons outlined above, the CAB does not believe it would be worthwhile to conduct an extensive content analysis of broadcast television programming. The data provided earlier makes it very clear that there is an obvious absence of persons with disabilities among the employees of Canadian television broadcasters. Undertaking an extensive content analysis would not shed any new light on this situation.

In order to address concerns regarding the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming the CAB believes that its approach must be both tactical and short term and strategic and longer term.

### ***CAB Research Strategy***

In the short term, it will be important to provide information to broadcasters on a wide range of topics, including appropriate language and portrayal. The development of tool kits that deal with issues such as how to ensure that persons with disabilities are welcome in their workplaces, where to find skilled persons with disabilities for jobs within the industry and training targeted at a broader understanding of portrayal and other issues. By improving portrayal and increasing the presence of persons with disabilities in television programming, broadcasters can help remove negative stereotypes and encourage more participation from persons with disabilities in broadcasting and its related industries.

---

\* Of the photos 132 were of women, 24 were of Aboriginal people and 82 showed people from various ethnocultural communities.

**CAB's Action Plan to Examine Issues Concerning the Presence, Portrayal and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Television Programming – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

In the longer term, the CAB will work with its industry partners to develop a strategy to attract more people to broadcasting. The CAB believes this involves action at four levels:

- ❖ Advancement of individuals already established in the industry – including training opportunities, promotion to positions of more responsibility and developing role models.
- ❖ Retention of individuals just starting in the industry – internships and mentoring can play an important role.
- ❖ University or college students graduating from programs that feed into the industry – providing information as to educational choices and work experiences that will prepare them for the kinds of positions likely to be available.
- ❖ Primary and secondary school – outreach to young persons with disabilities to show that broadcasting and its related industries are viable options for them.

The CAB's approach will have four major components:

*Leadership* – The CAB will assume a leadership role within the industry by highlighting the importance of employment initiatives and concerns regarding the fair and accurate portrayal of persons with disabilities in television programming.

*Employment* – Identify and remove barriers to employment as well as providing outreach to persons with disabilities at all levels of the industry. Ensuring transparent and accessible information will be integral to increasing representation of persons with disabilities in the industry.

*Portrayal Strategy* – Provide broadcasters with tools to ensure appropriate use of terms and images. For example, coordinating workshops that focus on the “dos and don'ts” of portrayal, the development of producer guidelines for in-house, acquired and/or commissioned programming, and other relevant tools.

*Educational Strategy* – Initiatives aimed at encouraging students with disabilities to consider a career in broadcasting or related fields.

## *Possible Products and Deliverables*

### *A Tool Kit for Broadcasters*

The “*Broadcaster Tool Kit*” would include a comprehensive set of materials to help broadcasters advance the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in the industry. This tool kit would be updated regularly and would be a dynamic package changing over time to reflect the most pressing challenges in the following areas:

- *Hiring* - Provision of a comprehensive list of contact organizations, including members from disability communities, industry associations, educational institutions, unions, talent agencies and other organizations which can provide lists of qualified persons with disabilities for employment opportunities.
- *Access* – Provision of information on best practices for accessibility, including appropriate building specifications for retrofitting or building new studios and other facilities. Would also include information on making their products more accessible – whether on-air or on-line.
- *Accommodation* – Provision of materials on adapting the workplace to welcome new employees with disabilities. May include DVD's, programs, training and other materials.
- *Best Practices* – Establish a set of best practices to address issues of concern regarding the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming. These best practices would build on the recommended best practices of the Task Force for Cultural Diversity on Television, which were endorsed by CAB members in July 2004. In developing these best practices, the CAB will examine practices developed by television industries in other jurisdictions. For example, it is generally agreed that the U.K. leads the world in its approach to disability issues in all areas. The CAB might also wish to include lessons learned from other fields of business in Canada such as the development of Business Leadership Networks (BLN). BLNs are employer-led coalitions of business, government, and community organizations dedicated to advancing employment opportunities that benefit both businesses and people with disabilities. In Canada, there are active chapters in Vancouver and Manitoba.
- Another important component of the “*Broadcaster Tool Kit*” will be to develop a better knowledge base of persons with disabilities who are already working in the broadcast industry. The CAB expects to use focus groups or other survey instruments to develop a better portrait of the challenges and opportunities that employees with disabilities face in our industry.

### ***Outreach to Disability Communities***

The CAB will explore the best means to ensure regular feedback from disability groups and communities, including a wide spectrum of national organizations, individual broadcasters and producers. This will require a wider range of consultations expanding the contacts to more disability organizations and also to related industry stakeholders who are addressing the same issues. For example, the CAB notes that ACTRA has made some efforts to develop ideas for their membership and that the National Film Board has started programs to encourage participation from filmmakers with disabilities.

The CAB will also look into developing a resource centre for persons with disabilities that would provide information about our industry and relevant initiatives. In addition to information on employment opportunities, the centre could provide the latest information on new programming initiatives, broadcast technology developments and consumer information that would be of use to persons with disabilities both as consumers and as potential employees in the broadcast industry.

### ***Educational Information***

The CAB will partner with industry stakeholders and educational institutions to develop materials to encourage the participation of persons with disabilities at the various levels in the industry.

In consultation and partnership with organizations such as, but not limited to, the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA), Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec (APFTQ), Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA), Union des Artistes (UDA), Writers Guild of Canada (WGC), Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ), Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), Radio-Television News Directors Association of Canada (RTNDA), Canadian Independent Film Caucus, Telefilm Canada, Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC) and the Canadian Television Fund (CTF), the CAB will endeavour to provide information on existing industry programs or funding mechanisms available specifically to persons with disabilities and other related professional development programs. Given the high incidence of disabilities within the Aboriginal population, the CAB will also seek to engage these communities by outreach to the Assembly of First Nations, APTN and other relevant stakeholders. The goal of this initiative is not only to facilitate and increase the flow of information regarding specific industry programs but also to ensure a harmonization of efforts in this regard.

Within the broadcast education community, the CAB will consult various educational institutions as well as the umbrella organization, Broadcast Education Association of Canada (BEAC) to determine ways to encourage better participation among persons with disabilities. For example, the development of entrance scholarships, internship programs for students with disabilities, and the establishment of mentorship networks within our industry.

The CAB will also seek out partnerships with national and provincial teachers associations, educational umbrella organizations, the National Education Association for Disabled Students and other related educational institutions to develop a set of materials for students with disabilities in middle school and secondary school that encourages a career in the broadcasting industry.

## **Workplan**

The Steering Committee would oversee and conduct three main streams of work for inclusion in a report to the CRTC.

*Comprehensive Consultations* – These consultations would be much wider and even more representative than the consultations conducted to date and would focus on the following areas:

- ❖ The disability community – including national and provincial associations, academics and others working in this area.
- ❖ Persons in the broadcasting industry with disabilities – this could be through focus groups or surveys.
- ❖ Senior executives of the broadcasting industry – with a view to seeking out where change can be best effected and how broadcasters might contribute.

*Focus Group Research* - Including persons with disabilities from both inside and outside the broadcasting industry

*Best Practices Research* – Comprehensive research on initiatives in a number of areas:

- ❖ Canadian broadcasting and related industries
- ❖ Broadcasting initiatives in other jurisdictions e.g. U.K., U.S., and Australia
- ❖ Initiatives from governments across Canada
- ❖ Review of Best Practices from non-broadcast industries.
- ❖ The research and consultations would inform the development of a Report by the Steering Committee with recommendations for on-going activities.

## **Time Lines**

The CAB proposes the following tentative schedule:

<b>Action plan submitted to CRTC</b>	16 August 2004
<b>Approval by CRTC</b>	October 2004
<b>Striking of Steering and Outreach Committees (to be announced at CAB convention)</b>	October – November 2004
<b>First Meeting of Steering Committee (Mandate, Terms of Reference, Work Plan)</b>	December 2004
<b>Research Phase (Review of Initiatives, Focus Groups etc..)</b>	January to February 2005
<b>Consultations</b>	January to March 2005
<b>Final Report to CRTC</b>	June/July 2005

## Appendix I - List of Persons Consulted

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representatives</b>
Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres	Maria Kononpeskas Jihan Abbas, Researcher Sandra Carpenter, former Executive Director
Canadian Paraplegic Association	Martin Belliveau, Director of Advocacy and Communications
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)	Bernard Nunan, Researcher/Writer, Consumer and Government Relations David MacDonald, Manager of Rehab Ontario Division
Learning Disability Association of Canada	Diane Sullivan, Project Officer
Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA)	Leesa Levinson
Fireweed Media Productions Inc.	Don Peuramaki, President
National Network on Mental Health	Richard Chenier, Consultant
National Federation of the Blind: Advocates for Equality	John Rae, President
Ryerson RBC Institute for Disability Studies Research and Education	Catherine Frazee and Melanie Panitch
Council of Canadians with Disabilities	Mr. Laurie Beachell – Executive Director Jim Dirksen, Past Chair Human Rights Committee
Canadian Hearing Society	Gary Malkowski, VP, Consumer, Gov't, and Corp Relations
People First of Canada	Shelley Rattai
Social Development Canada Office of Disability Issues	Fraser Valentine Michel Regnauld Phil G Vangelis Genevieve Proulx

## Appendix II - Questions for CAB Consultations

### *Employment practices*

1. What are the major barriers to participation in the workforce for the group you represent?
2. Are there any industries that you feel have done a good job in including your group in their workforce? Any particular individual companies? Could you outline what they did that was right?
3. Have you any experience with broadcasting companies in the area of employment? If so, what were your experiences?

### *Portrayal*

4. How well do you think the group you represent is portrayed on television?
5. Are there particular issues with portrayal that one may be more evident than others?
6. Are there any particular programs that you feel do a good job in the portrayal of persons with disabilities? If so, please outline why you think so?