



TANGATA GROUP

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**TANGATA GROUP IS FOUNDED TO ADDRESS
THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WORLDWIDE**

**INTERNATIONAL NGO ESTABLISHED
ON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UN CONVENTION
ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Its founders today announced the establishment of the Tangata Group, a non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to the proposition that disability rights are human rights. The formation of the new organization was announced today on the tenth anniversary of the groundbreaking United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a 2006 United Nations treaty ratified by more than 165 nations.

Tangata Group envisions a world where people with disabilities live self-directed and dignified lives that are free of oppression, exploitation and discrimination. The organization provides consultant services on domestic and international issues related to disability and human rights including not only the CRPD but also the Americans with Disabilities Act, and provides technical assistance to nations around the world in enhancing compliance with the treaty.

The name Tangata derives from the Maori language, and may roughly be translated as "the essence of being human." The three founders reflect a diversity of background, experience, knowledge and skill:

- Professor Janet E. Lord is a renowned international human rights attorney and a key drafter of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She focuses her work on providing technical assistance to over 30 countries around the world as they work to comply with this major treaty. Earlier in her career, Janet Lord worked on the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, focusing on landmine survivor rights in mine-affected countries, and served as legal counsel to NGOs and lead governments in the negotiation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



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- Professor Michael A. Schwartz is the only culturally Deaf law professor in the United States. He holds five academic degrees and is a professor of law at Syracuse University's College of Law where he supervises law students in the Disability Rights Clinic, a free law school clinic that provides legal representation to clients with disabilities;
- Professor Brent C. Elder is a professor of inclusive education at Rowan University. He has a doctorate from Syracuse University's School of Education and has extensive international experience in inclusive education.

Professor Lord said: "Tangata Group is all about tending to international disability law and policy, disability inclusive development, participatory human rights education, and NGO participation and accountability in international law and processes."

Professor Schwartz said: "This organization fights for the elimination of all forms of discrimination: systemic, individual, physical, attitudinal, and legal. The tenth anniversary of the United Nations treaty provides us with an opportunity to provide technical assistance to nations around the world in enhancing compliance with the treaty."

Professor Elder said: "Tangata Group is founded on the idea that disability rights are human rights which need to be carefully applied in local contexts around the world in ways that construct disability as a facet of one's identity that adds value to society."

Both Schwartz and Elder are Fulbright scholars in Northern Ireland and Kenya, respectively. Schwartz studied Deaf access to healthcare for his Fulbright project, while Elder studied the development of sustainable inclusive practices in rural western Kenya.

About Tangata Group

Tangata Group, Inc., is a non-profit NGO established to provide technical assistance to international signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Research services consist of qualitative research, community-based participatory research, action research, and decolonizing and indigenous methodologies. Tangata Group's interdisciplinary collaborations focus on disability rights, international human rights law, inclusive education, and access to justice.

DISABILITY RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

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