effectively engage south China's community of people with disabilities. Future events are already being planned.

Similarly, the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo has during the past few years used International Visitor Leadership Programs (IVLPs), expert speaker programs and other initiatives to promote disability rights. (Japan is developing legislation to facilitate its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)

Meanwhile, the Taiwan Association for Disability Rights, which actively lobbies for legislation and raises public awareness, was started by an IVLP participant who was inspired by his time in the United States and his interaction with disability rights activists from around the world. Stella Young, an Australian comedian and disability rights activist, also visited the United States on an IVLP.

In July, Mission Thailand hosted guests representing the special needs community, including Thailand's Special Olympics Team, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
State Department photo

DRL's Global Program Senior Program Officer Ramiro Martinez develops global programs for disability rights. "People and especially children with mental and/or physical disabilities are often ostracized from society," he observed. "In many communities and countries around the world, including where family honor is critically important, family members often disallow their children or other family members with disabilities from participating in society out of embarrassment."