



Canada
Voir au-delà du handicap
Promoting a new perspective on disability

Equality for All

2008

December 3rd is the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This year's international theme is the "Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities: Dignity and Justice for All of Us". "Dignity and Justice for All of Us" is the theme for this day as well as the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Did you Know?

- In Canada, there are national and provincial level laws that either reference or are directly related to disability.
- There is still a startling gap between the stated goals of this legislation and the realized rights of persons with disabilities.
- There is an abundance of evidence to suggest that persons with disabilities are over-represented in categories like poverty, homelessness and unemployment.
- The gap between the promise of equal citizenship for persons with disabilities and the reality of their day-to-day lives are symptoms of the under-development of accessibility and disability supports, programs and legislation.
- There are national laws that support disability discrimination. For example, the Canadian Immigration Act discriminates against persons with disabilities and their families and many individuals with disabilities are being denied entry based on the perception that disability places a burden on health and social services.
- These types of misperceptions ignore the contributions of citizens with disabilities.
- Rates of violence and abuse against people with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities, are among the highest for any group in Canadian society. We know that for Aboriginal Canadians with disabilities these rates are even higher.
- According to the International Labour Organization, the annual loss of global Gross Domestic Product due to the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market is between US\$1.37 trillion and US\$1.94 trillion.

Solutions:

- Let's put an end to discriminatory legislation and work together to create solutions by applying a positive approach to barrier removal!
- Promote the principles of the Independent Living (IL) philosophy that focus on enabling individuals with disabilities to have options, make their own decisions and control their own lives. By applying these principles you are directly addressing human rights issues by increasing an individual's capacity for full participation.
- In 2007, the national disability community worked together to create "From Vision to Action: Building an Inclusive and Accessible Canada" in 2007, a framework for action and has been signed by 99 disability organizations. We are united! Go to www.endexclusion.ca to learn more.
- A comprehensive federal disability strategy is needed. Solutions are known and innovative policies and programs can be created! IL Canada, its member IL Centres and other disability organizations want to work with governments to help them create legislation, programs and services that facilitate access, inclusion and full citizenship.
- In order to support the innovation, creativity and the talents of persons with disabilities and their organizations, a renewed and expanded Office for Disability Issues' Social Development Partnership Program is required and needs to include the enhancement of the Independent Living, Community Inclusion and other national disability organizations' program investments. This will ensure that the wisdom gained from living with disability is accessible to public policy developers and that programs that build the capacity of individuals and communities are increased. Together we can build a better Canada for all!
- For more information on working together and applying a positive approach to barrier removal please contact Independent Living Canada or your local Independent Living Centre. To find a Centre near you go to www.ilc-vac.ca

"In order for our country to benefit from the talents of every one of its people, no Canadian man or woman should be deprived of job opportunities or advantages for any reason but competence. It is a question not only of productivity, but of dignity as well."

- Rosalie Abella