



## Economic Rights of Persons with Disabilities

December 3<sup>rd</sup> is the United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons. This year's theme *Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Action in Development* recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities and the need for them to play an active and meaningful role in development for their community. To highlight the importance of this day and the year's theme, the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) is releasing a series of four themed fact sheets throughout the month of November reflecting the four pillars of rights necessary for true equity for Canadian with disabilities.

*Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.<sup>1</sup>*

*Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Article 23, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<sup>2</sup> Article 25, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

### Fact:

- ❖ A recent Canadian survey of attitude towards persons with disabilities reports that ¾ of respondents feel it is either **very or somewhat difficult** for **persons with disabilities to achieve financial security, maintain stable employment**, have **access to reliable transportation**, and **raise a family**.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ **More than 1 in 5** persons with disabilities **report being the victim of discrimination** while trying to maintain employment.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ **8 in 10 Canadians** agree with the statement "**Canadians with disabilities are less likely to be hired** for a job than those without disabilities, **even if they are equally qualified**."<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Conservative estimates put the cost of disability in terms of interrupted and foregone employment in Canada at **\$42 billion** in 1998.
- ❖ Workers with disabilities remain overrepresented in the lowest wage groupings, with **over 60% of workers with disabilities** with less than 8 years experience with **earnings within the lowest wage grouping**. This is compared to only 46.2% of their non-disabled peers with similar work experience.<sup>4</sup>
- ❖ **Over 56% of workers with disabilities** report having no training in the previous year while 45.4% of their non-disabled peers report the same lack of training.<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ Workers *without* disabilities are more likely than those with disabilities to receive promotions.<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ Among employed persons with disabilities in Canada, **26%** of those who require accessible transportation do not have access to it.<sup>7</sup>
- ❖ **Persons with disabilities who are employed** are **less likely to have to rely on others** for extra income and basic disability supports.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Environics Research Group (2004) [Canadian Attitudes Towards Disability Issues](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Council on Social Development (2005) [Disability Fact Sheet No.16](#).

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Council on Social Development (2005) [Disability Fact Sheet No.16](#).

<sup>6</sup> Canadian Council on Social Development (2005) [Disability Fact Sheet No.16](#).

<sup>7</sup> Canadian Council on Social Development (2005) [Disability Fact Sheet No.18](#).

<sup>8</sup> Government of Canada (2004) [Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#).

### Solutions:

- ❖ The Government of Canada notes the **cost of barriers to employment** for persons with disabilities is **high** for **individuals, families, employers** and **Canadian society**. The combination of an aging society and shrinking populations means **we as Canadians cannot afford to ignore the skills, talents, and potential socio-economic contributions of Canadians with disabilities**.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ **84%** of Canadians asked to some extent agree that public funds should be provided to **support Independent Living**.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ Nationally, **CAILC and Independent Living Resource Centres** provide the individualized supports and services necessary for the economic inclusion of persons with disabilities. These supports and services include skills development and training opportunities; help with the identification and retention of paid employment; and assisting local communities and employers in achieving access.

<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada (2004) [Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#).

<sup>2</sup> Environics Research Group (2004) [Canadian Attitudes Towards Disability Issues](#).