



## Income Support for Persons with Disabilities

December 3rd is the International Day of Disabled Persons. The theme of this year's day, **Nothing About Us Without Us**, recognizes the need for persons with disabilities to take a lead role in the decision making process. To highlight the importance of this day and theme, the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) is releasing a series of four fact sheets throughout the month of November.

***If we have learned one thing from the civil rights movement...it's that when others speak for you, you lose"***  
~ Ed Roberts <sup>1</sup>

***The demand 'Nothing About Us Without Us' is a demand for self-determination...***  
~ James Charlton <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Driedger, D. (1989) The Last Civil Rights Movement: Disabled People's International. New York: St. Martin's Press. Page 28.

<sup>2</sup> Charlton, J. (1998) Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment. London: University of California Press. Page 17.

### Fact:

- ❖ People with disabilities represent **12.4%** of the Canadian population. <sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Government programs are the main source of income for the majority of persons with disabilities not in the labour force. <sup>2</sup>
- ❖ The employment rate for persons with disabilities is almost ½ that of their non-disabled peers. <sup>1</sup>
- ❖ There are additional costs associated with living with a disability, and persons with disabilities typically need higher incomes to maintain an adequate standard of living. <sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Working age persons with disabilities only get **76%** of the average household after tax income. <sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Cost has been cited as the main barrier preventing individuals from obtaining the assistive devices they need. <sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Less than ½ of the **1.9 million** persons with disabilities in Canada over the age of 15 receive the help they require with activities of daily living: **45%** say they need more help than they are receiving, and **10%** say they receive no help. <sup>1</sup>
- ❖ A source of income, either from paid employment or income support, has been identified by persons with disabilities as essential, yet the majority of persons with disabilities worldwide continue to experience chronic poverty and inaccessible supports. <sup>4</sup>
- ❖ In Canada, persons with disabilities are more likely to experience food insecurity (i.e. going without food, eating less, and/or being unable to purchase needed food). <sup>5</sup>
- ❖ **41%** of those using food banks have either a disability or long-term illness. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada (2002) Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>2</sup> Saskatchewan Voice of Persons with Disabilities. Income Support for People with Disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> DAA/UNISCO (1995) Overcoming Obstacles to the Integration of Disabled People.

<sup>4</sup> Turmusani, M. (2003) Poverty and disabled people in development context: examples from Jordan and Afghanistan.

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Council on Social Development (2003) Disability Fact Sheet No.10.

<sup>6</sup> United Way of Greater Toronto (2002) United Way Facts: Helping People with Disabilities Live Independently.

### Solutions:

- ❖ Supporting the growth of Independent Living (IL) in Canada is essential to addressing the needs of persons with disabilities.
- ❖ The IL model of service and supports has had a more positive impact on people's lives than rehabilitative and traditional models<sup>1</sup>; it has enabled persons to make more effective use of services and supports<sup>2</sup>; and it has supported over **5,000** persons with disabilities in their journey towards employment and financial independence.
- ❖ Independent Living enables persons with disabilities to move away from models that foster dependency and promote the marginalization and poverty highlighted above. Independent Living facilitates the full social, economic, political, and cultural inclusion of persons with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup> The Impact of Independent Living Centres in Canada (1996) Brock university.

<sup>2</sup> The government of Canada (1996) Lessons Learned: Disability Policies and Programs.