



Social Rights of Persons with Disabilities

December 3rd 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.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.¹

Everyone has the right to an education.²

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in [the] Declaration can be fully realized.³

Everyone has duties to their community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.⁴

¹ Article 1, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

² Article 26, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

³ Article 28, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

⁴ Article 29, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Fact:

- ❖ Persons with disabilities in Canada are more likely than their non-disabled peers to have **lower levels of education**. For example, **only 13.9%** of persons with disabilities between the ages of 25-54 **have completed university** compared to **24.8%** of their non-disabled counterparts.¹
- ❖ **2.4 million** adults Canadians with disabilities, or **70%** of adults with disabilities, **require support related to daily living**. These **disability supports enable persons** with disabilities **to overcome** existing attitudinal and structural **barriers** that prevent their full inclusion in Canadian society.²
- ❖ Among those adults with disabilities who require the support of an aid or device, **1/3 report unmet needs**.³
- ❖ **Cost remains a major barrier** preventing persons with disabilities from accessing the supports necessary for full inclusion. **66%** of those reporting unmet needs cited aids and devices as being **"too expensive"** while **50%** noted the required aid or device was **not covered by insurance**.⁴
- ❖ The **benefits of social inclusion** illustrate the importance of ensuring this remains a right for all persons with disabilities. For example, people who experience **personal control, opportunities for participation, and strong personal networks** tend to be **healthier** and **have a better quality of life**.⁵
- ❖ In Canada, organizations and agencies provide an important function for the delivery of needed supports and services. **24%** of those persons with disabilities requiring support with activities related to daily living, receive such support from organizations or agencies.⁶

¹Government of Canada (2001) Disability in Canada.

²Canadian Council on Social Development (2005) Disability Fact Sheet No.17.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Lord, J. (2005) An initial Framework for Quality Assurance: It's About People and Relationships.

⁶Canadian Council on Social Development (2005) Disability Fact Sheet No.17.

Solutions:

- ❖ **People with disabilities require a strong foundation of supports and services** to ensure they can overcome systematic and attitudinal barriers and achieve social inclusion.
- ❖ It has been suggested that the building blocks necessary for adequate supports include: **Access to individual planning** and facilitation to identify and access individualized supports; **Portability** of supports and funding to ensure individuals can choose needed supports and services rather than be dependent on existing agencies and funding structures that do not meet their needs; **Person-Directed** approach to disability supports to ensure people receive supports they need; **Shared responsibility and accountability** to ensure we are working as partners towards solutions based outcomes; and **Economic conditions that enable full and active participation**.¹
- ❖ **CAILC** and its **Independent Living Resource Centres** work hard to **advocate for, design, and deliver disability-led supports and services** that reflect the building blocks necessary for social inclusion.

¹ Lord, Snow, & Dingwall (2005) Building a New Story: Transforming Disability Supports and Policies.