

Communities Can International and UNESCO Ensure Education for All Children

Currently, children, youth and adults with disabilities are among the groups most excluded from receiving a basic education. In fact, an estimated 90 percent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school.

To help ensure access to and promote completion of quality education for every child, youth and adult with a disability, **Communities Can International** participated in founding *A Flagship on Education for All and the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion*. The flagship is an alliance of global disability organizations, international development and intergovernmental agencies, and experts in the fields of special and inclusive education from developed and developing nations.

Established in 1993 by the Georgetown University Center

for Child and Human Development in collaboration with CECHÉ, **Communities Can International** is actively engaged in the flagship's secretariat at UNESCO. UNESCO actively advocates the right to education for all children, youth and adults, including those with disabilities, in its current Education for All (EFA) initiative, a major global program expected to result in all children receiving a basic education by 2015. The initiative is endorsed by all countries and supported by a wide range of multilateral/bilateral donors and international organizations.

Currently, the flagship is assisting nations in implementing their national plans for EFA, as well as the inclusion of children with disabilities, through a variety of activities and actions, including:

- Promoting full participation of persons with disabilities and families in development of policies and practices on education at local, national, regional and global levels
- Seeking to ensure that all governmental entities, donors and nongovernmental organizations endorse the universal right of education for all children, youth and adults with a disability
- Acting as a catalyst to incorporate fully the flagship goal into national plans of action and regional policies
- Mobilizing resources in support of the flagship goal through obtaining the commitment of new resources from national and international entities, and leveraging existing EFA resources
- Ensuring that EFA monitoring includes quantitative and qualitative data related to persons with disabilities and documentation of resources allocated to the implementation of EFA for these individuals
- Identifying and disseminating effective practices, and stimulating research and studies related to the flagship goal through training and technical activities.

Education and life-long learning opportunities can erase the major gaps in economic and social development that effectively marginalize individuals with disabilities. Through EFA and the flagship, nations can receive support to assure a basic education for all.

by Dr. Phyllis Magrab, Member, CECHÉ Council

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