

CANADA'S

Community

Inclusion

INITIATIVE

2004



Creating inclusive

communities for all people.

A Celebration of Citizenship

BUILDING CAPACITY AT THE community level to successfully include people with disabilities, and their families, in ways that promote and safeguard their full citizenship is one of the primary objectives of the Community Inclusion Initiative.

Through efforts within this national Initiative, individuals and families have been afforded greater opportunity to participate in and contribute to the life of their community, to demonstrate leadership, and to mobilize community activities that promote greater inclusion of all citizens.

The impacts of the initiative have been enormous. With the leadership of the community living movement, partnerships have been created with hundreds of community and government organizations — each working toward transforming the way we live together, and making our communities more understanding and accepting of diversity.

Initially what began as an initiative focused on disability issues, it is now clear that inclusion is of importance, relevance and benefit to us all — as communities and as Canadians.

“What has been really important is the fellowship with other parents, laughing, sharing, empowering, getting rid of the loneliness, causing change, learning, having fun for once, enjoying the respite and get away time, leaving the stress behind, making new friends who can relate and a shared humor only we can relate to and know.”

Nova Scotia

“The Circle of Friends Inclusion Project is a great opportunity for many of us to make friends with those in the community that we might not have ordinarily. The Circle of Friends project has made a big impact on my life. It's nice running into my new friends in the grocery store or around town. This program has also motivated me to get involved with other local programs.”

Yukon

“The CI movement in Saskatchewan has touched the lives of many people throughout our province. You know this when you hear a mother in rural Saskatchewan say that the development of the Family Network “saved my life”. You believe it when you hear an advocate say that his involvement in the Self-Advocacy Action Group “has made me a stronger person” and when you know that this person, who once lived in an institution, now acts as an advocate for other people with intellectual disabilities.”

Saskatchewan

“At a community meeting I said I would like to have friends and go swimming and do other ‘fun stuff’. Things started to change. Now I have friends. I go swimming, dancing, and occasionally hang out at the club with my friends. This year for the first time, I went to the New Years party. I had a ball!”

Newfoundland and Labrador

“It is the pebble thrown into the pond, which creates the ripple of change in the lives of individuals, families, schools, and entire communities, and we encourage its continuation.”

Manitoba

The Community Inclusion Initiative

— *Citizenship, Participation and Dignity*

Seven years after its inception, the Community Inclusion (CI) Initiative continues to represent a unique model of partnership between the Government of Canada (Department of Social Development), the Canadian Association for Community Living, People First of Canada, and has enabled collaboration among diverse organizations at the national, provincial/territorial and local levels. The Initiative has been successful in reframing “community inclusion” from an issue seen originally as being vested and owned by the “disability community” to one that more correctly speaks to issues of **full citizenship, human rights and equal participation**.

The national Community Inclusion Initiative has the following broad objectives:

- Increase overall public awareness of inclusion; resulting in increased understanding of barriers to inclusion, the value of inclusion, and strategies to achieve enhanced inclusion.
- Increase development and use of best practices to promote inclusion in a broad range of areas: including but not limited to schools, businesses, recreation and leisure activities, community organizations, neighborhoods, and families.
- Identification of and provision of support and training to emerging leaders in the inclusion movement (especially parents and persons with intellectual disabilities).
- Influence and advance policies, and an associated policy framework, at a national level that will improve the lives of individuals who have intellectual disabilities and their families.
- Engage new partners and stakeholders from a broad range of interests and areas, and to provide them with the tools and knowledge to enable them to promote and facilitate inclusion in their respective areas.
- Build ways and means for communities to meet people with intellectual disabilities, get to know them, acknowledge and appreciate their contributions.
- Increase the capacity of communities to include people with disabilities in all aspects of community life.
- Support people with disabilities and their families to become connected to their communities.

The Community Inclusion Initiative is much more than a collection of federally funded project-based activities. While funding has been, and is, critical to the initial delivery of CI, this initial investment are far outweighed by the lasting effect that CI has had at a family, individual and community level. CI has enabled action that would not have been possible without the infusion of additional resources. More importantly, it has given local groups the time needed to develop resources (both human and financial) to sustain the efforts in the longer term. The Initiative has produced numerous examples of networks of families and individuals who years after the expiration of the project funds still remain active and influential within their communities, provinces and territories. Community Inclusion funds have been used to demonstrate to a host of community and government organizations the ways and means by which to increase accessibility and inclusiveness.

One of the fundamental accomplishments of the Initiative is that while CI was initially portrayed as an issue of particular relevance to persons with developmental disabilities, it has quickly evolved to one of citizenship, human rights, and the development of a welcoming accommodating framework at a community level for all citizens. Partnerships have been formed, strengthened, and sustained with literally hundreds of community organizations both within and outside the disability movement. These partnerships have led directly to lasting change in, for example, community infrastructure, physical accessibility, and changes in the policies and guidelines of organizations that allow for and encourage a more inclusive and diverse membership.

Community Inclusion incorporates the successful elements of preceding initiatives, and focuses on new strategies including:

- Full involvement of people with intellectual disabilities and their families in all aspects of planning and implementation.
- Involvement of and real ownership by communities and community stakeholders.
- Extensive outreach to non-traditional partners.
- Ensuring sustainability of efforts.
- Rather than creating new, parallel, and segregated programs, support existing programs to include people with intellectual (and other) disabilities.

Real Community Involvement Success Since 1997 *This year's success stories*

- Over 500 communities across Canada are involved, in every province and territory.
- More than 800 community organizations are active in projects.
- 350 local, provincial/territorial, and federal government departments are engaged in bringing about change.
- More than 2500 families and 5000 people with disabilities have been involved in activities.
- In-kind resources leveraged in every community.
- Efforts directed toward establishing “community building” as the foundation of inclusion.

“It has meant that voices unheard in the past are now being listened to; that voices not being listened to in the past are now being responded to. People in communities, schools, and other environments are engaged in the issue of inclusion in society. People and environments now have the capacity to embrace and respond to inclusion. People’s lives are being directly affected.”

Ontario

“The Public Education campaign I have been seeing on the TV of late plays a significant role in shaping public opinion. I know the commercials have changed my attitude. Now I see them going to regular school, assisting in parish work and out earning a living. Wow! Good for them and good for those who are willing to give them a chance.”

Prince Edward Island

“Our youth have become great leaders in promoting inclusion in their schools and communities. A provincial youth forum, *Festival d’Inclusion Fest*, brought together 60 youth to discuss inclusion and exclusion in their schools and to develop strategies to make their schools and communities more inclusive places to be. The youth very quickly grasped the concept of inclusion and have begun to make some amazing changes in their schools.

New Brunswick

“Our Inclusion Project has been one of the most effective means to allow consultation and partnership within the Canadian community living movement, and it has provided some influence on the social policies in Quebec, especially those of the Health and Social Services Department.”

Quebec

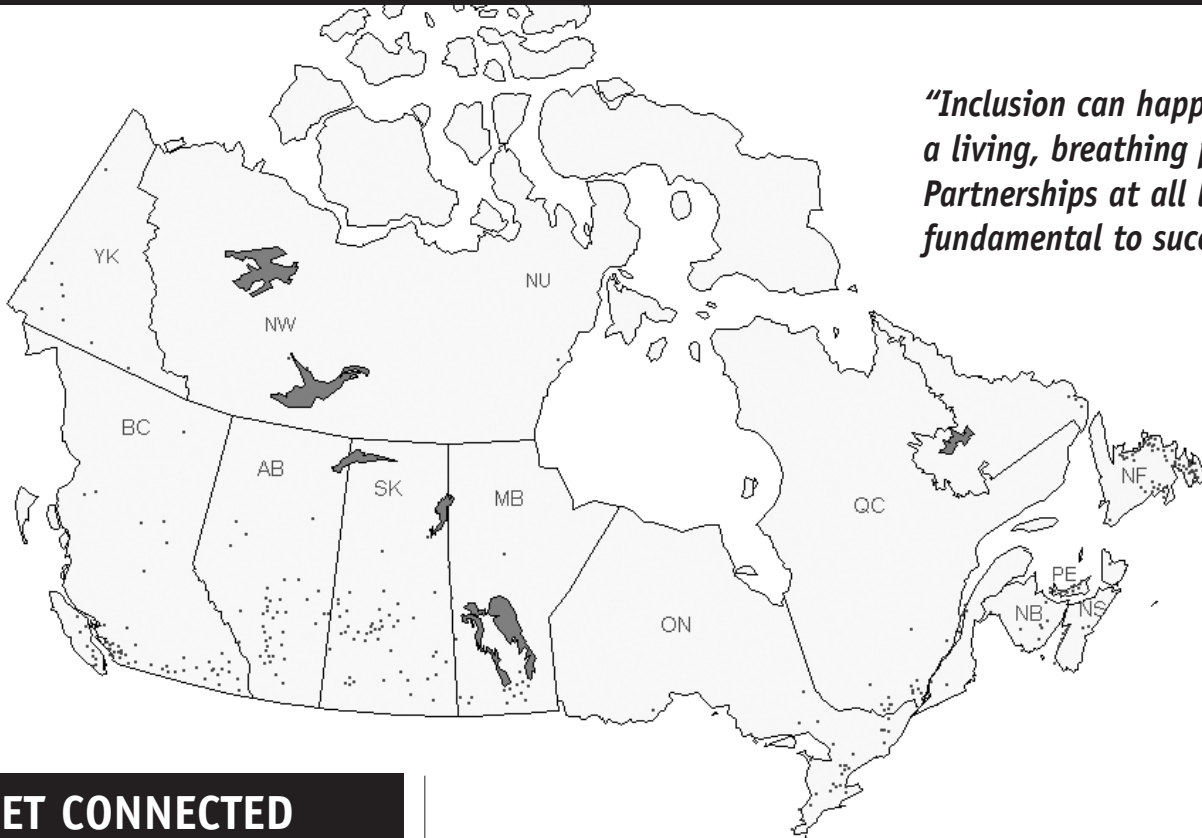
“Our Family Leadership series has led to the establishment of this province’s first legislation on Family Support for Children with Disabilities and parents have taken up many leadership roles across the province in the interests of creating more inclusive communities.”

Alberta

“Pamiqsaiji is an old Inuktitut word given to our Association by an elder. It means compassionate, caring, enhancing and supporting. It is truly a word that describes inclusion.”

Nunavut

Community Inclusion: Communities Involved



"Inclusion can happen! It is a living, breathing process. Partnerships at all levels are fundamental to success."

GET CONNECTED

TO HELP MAKE COMMUNITY INCLUSION WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING:

~ Canadian Association for Community Living
Tel: (416) 661-9611

~ British Columbia Association for Community Living
Tel: (604) 875-1119

~ Alberta Association for Community Living
Tel: (780) 451-3055

~ Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
Tel: (306) 955-3344

~ Association for Community Living-Manitoba
Tel: (204) 786-1607

~ Ontario Association for Community Living
Tel: (416) 447-4348

Hundreds of communities and thousands of individuals and families

~ Association du Québec pour l'intégration sociale
Tel: (514) 725-7245

~ New Brunswick Association for Community Living
Tel: (506) 458-8866

~ Nova Scotia Association for Community Living
Tel: (902) 469-1174

~ Prince Edward Island Association for Community Living
Tel: (902) 566-4844

~ Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living
Tel: (709) 722-0790

~ Yukon Association for Community Living
Tel: (867) 667-4606

~ Yellowknife Association for Community Living
Tel: (867) 920-2644

~ Pamiqsaiji Association for Community Living
Tel: (867) 645-2542



Canadian Association for Community Living

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