

The World Institute on Disability is an internationally recognized public policy center organized by and for people with disabilities. It works to strengthen the disability movement through research, training, advocacy and public education to help people with disabilities throughout the world enjoy increased opportunities to live independently. A majority of the Board and staff are persons with disabilities.

Founded in 1983 by leaders of the Independent Living Movement, WID's work focuses on issues and problems that directly affect people's ability to live full and independent lives. WID's programs address employment, economic development and financial stability issues; conduct research and policy analysis on personal assistance services, accessible health care, technology and other topics; and provide assistance to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and disabled leaders in developing countries.

California Work Incentives Initiative

WID developed the California Work Incentives Initiative (CWII) in 2000 to provide information on health coverage, work, and benefits to youth and adults with disabilities in California, and to develop community based public policy recommendations.

Through Disability Benefits 101 Information Services, CWII provides community outreach, training and web-based services, including one-on-one technical assistance at its website, Disability Benefits 101 (www.DB101.org). The site offers easy to understand, practical information on public and private benefits, employment services, and other programs, as well as interactive benefits calculators.

In addition to its information services, CWII also develops community based public policy recommendations. As part of this effort, it staffs a statewide policy, education, and discussion forum on health, work, benefits, and disability - The California Work Group on Work Incentives and Health Care (the CWG).

CWII has received funding from the California Health Incentives Improvement Project, The California Endowment, the Social Security Administration, and individual training and event sponsors.

For more information, contact Bryon MacDonald, Project and Policy Development Manager, at bryon@wid.org.

Red Cross Training Project

WID and the American Red Cross (ARC) launched an innovative national training, awareness and action program to help ARC staff and volunteers better serve people with disabilities during disasters. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the ARC saw a need to improve outreach and response to vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities.

Funded through a grant from the Verizon Foundation, the program will improve emergency preparedness and disaster response by ARC staff and volunteers for people with disabilities; increase collaboration between the ARC and local community-based disability organizations; and increase understanding of the needs of people with disabilities in disaster situations.

WID and the ARC will set up a pilot program in one of 10-targeted locations across the country that could be affected by a high-risk disaster such as an earthquake or forest fire. Locations selected for training so far are Chicago, Houston, New Orleans and New York. Once the pilot program is complete, the ARC will expand the training to all 10 locations. WID also will develop disability resource directories for each location, including information on local community-based disability organizations.

For more information, contact Kathy Martinez, Executive Director, at kathy@wid.org.

Access to Assets

Approximately 20% of the United States population lives with some level of disability, and people with disabilities are almost three times as likely to live in poverty than any other group. WID's Access to Assets project opens doors for the disability community by promoting asset-building and financial literacy among people with disabilities. Asset building is an anti-poverty strategy helping low-income people move toward greater economic independence by saving and purchasing long-term assets. Building assets, as a complement to increasing income, provides the stability to escape the cycle of poverty.

Access to Assets bridges the gap between the asset building and disability communities through the following services:

- ▶ **Training and Technical Assistance:** Advise asset-building organizations how to include consumers with disabilities in their programs.

- ▶ **Disability Community Outreach:** Inform disability organizations about available programs and relevant federal policy.

- ▶ **Policy Analysis:** Develop and influence federal asset-building legislation conducive to the participation of people with disabilities.

- ▶ **Public Education:** Distribute monthly EQUITY e-newsletter. The newsletter includes articles by leaders in the field, program administrators, and participants in asset-building programs, helpful tips, answers to questions about disability issues, federal policy updates, and resources. Read current and past editions of **EQUITY** at <http://www.wid.org/equity>

- ▶ **Information and Referral:** Toll-free hotline serving individuals with disabilities seeking information on how to participate in poverty reduction programs.

For more information, contact Project Manager Thomas Foley at tom@wid.org or toll-free 1-866-723-1201.

Health Access and Long Term Services

WID addresses health care disparities for people with disabilities by working to improve access to quality care. In addition to addressing physical accessibility issues, WID trains doctors and medical staff in culturally competent health care and in how to make services and equipment accessible.

Access to Medical Care: Adults with Physical Disabilities is a 20-minute video/DVD and training curriculum for physicians, dentists, nurses, and other medical staff about key issues that influence the quality of care in outpatient clinical settings. The video uses interviews with medical providers and a diverse group of people with disabilities to address cultural competence; access and communication issues in the clinic; common myths and stereotypes about disability that interfere with accurate assessment of patients; and barriers to health care delivery. The training curriculum offers case-based learning exercises and extensive in-depth reference materials about appropriate provision of care, specific skills to increase good communication and rapport, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The curriculum emphasizes access and communication as the fundamental components in addressing health care disparities for people with disabilities.

WID also seeks to improve the quality and availability of long-term services for people with disabilities, such as Personal Assistance Services (often referred to as home health care) that help people with activities of daily living, such as dressing, bathing and eating. Such assistance can make the critical difference between independent living in the community or institutionalization.

Unfortunately, instances of physical or emotional abuse in such settings are alarmingly high. In response, WID is creating the **Curriculum on Abuse Prevention and Empowerment (CAPE)**, a comprehensive training curriculum to educate service providers, people with disabilities and family members about abuse awareness and prevention strategies. Funded by the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research, CAPE explores fundamental issues of abuse, best-practices training approaches, and personal narratives of successful interventions. The recently expanded CAPE website (www.wid.org/cape) offers an introduction and sampling of the texts, tools, and activities of its abuse-prevention curriculum in both English and Spanish.

For more information, contact Senior Researcher Marsha Saxton at marsax@wid.org.

Proyecto Visión: National Technical Assistance Center for Latinos with Disabilities

Proyecto Visión, the first national technical assistance center to increase employment opportunities for Latinos with disabilities, provides culturally and linguistically appropriate services to employers, service providers and jobseekers to address barriers that preclude Latinos from effectively utilizing disability services and connecting to work.

Proyecto Visión's program includes the website **www.proyectovision.net** featuring news, resources and opportunities for scholarships/internships/jobs; an electronic newsletter featuring success stories about Latinos with disabilities who found employment; a listserv that allows readers to interact with others facing similar issues; a toll-free technical assistance hotline that provides access to a bilingual, bicultural job specialist for employment, independent living and benefits inquiries; an annual conference that brings together employers, service providers and jobseekers to network and exchange ideas; and regional trainings covering disability awareness, cultural competency for corporate recruiters, Latino and disability service providers, and emerging leaders with disabilities.

Proyecto Visión provides services to three primary groups:

▶ Jobseekers can access information and resources on education, employment preparation, job development, skills acquisition, and information and

Training and Public Education

Corporations, government agencies and organizations frequently hire WID's Training and Public Education Program to conduct trainings on disability awareness and etiquette, accommodating employees with disabilities, and increasing workplace diversity. WID's Training and Public Education Program also advises on access, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other civil rights laws and offers additional training packages on Access to Medical Care; Working Without Losing Healthcare or Other Needed Benefits; Making Asset Building Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities; and How to make Technology Accessible to People with Disabilities.

For more information, contact Kathy Martinez, Executive Director, at kathy@wid.org.

referral to vocational rehabilitation, independent living centers and other service providers.

▶ Employers can take advantage of training regarding recruiting, hiring, training and retaining employees with disabilities, and accommodations and disability etiquette in the workplace.

▶ Social service providers can learn how to provide culturally competent services and how to include Latinos with disabilities in their constituencies.

Over the last five years, Proyecto Visión's activities have been carried out in conjunction with regional community organizations including Access Living in Chicago, Best Buddies International in Miami, the Central Coast Center for Independent Living in Salinas (CA), Public Health Institute in Oakland, and the Westside Center for Independent Living in Los Angeles. The project was established in 2001 with support from the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration.

For more information, contact Kathy Martinez, Executive Director, at kathy@wid.org.

Technology Policy

Society is increasingly dependent on e-mail, cell phones, voicemail and the Internet for work and communication, but people with disabilities can be left out when these technologies are not accessible. WID laid the public policy groundwork for Section 255 of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, which requires telecommunications companies to make their products and services accessible to consumers with disabilities. WID also was an important advocate for the 1998 amendments to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which requires federal government agencies to comply with the Section 508 accessibility standards when procuring, developing, maintaining or using electronic and information technologies.

WID now advises the information technology and telecommunications industry on how to make their products and services accessible. WID develops public policy recommendations, identifies best practices and offers training curriculums on how consumers can find accessible technology.

For more information, contact Kathy Martinez, Executive Director, at kathy@wid.org.

International Development and Disability Inclusion

WID is committed to helping disability organizations in developing countries create networks, programs and services that promote the full inclusion of disabled people in their societies and support the international exchange of information and expertise on disability and disability policy. WID's International Development Program provides training and technical assistance to disabled persons organizations and governments in developing countries, as well as program development and evaluation, and legislative and policy development. WID also conducts research, exchange programs and international conferences.

Building on 13 years of experience working in Russia, WID recently trained and supported teams of young disabled activists from disability nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia and Uzbekistan. WID, in partnership with the Russian disability NGO, Perspektiva, worked to empower disabled youths, parents and other members of the community to challenge discrimination and eliminate social and physical barriers to an equal education for children with disabilities. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) from 2003-2006, the project involved over 40,000 teachers, students, journalists, lawyers, government officials, parents and members of the public through disability awareness trainings, workshops, film festivals and other public education events. The disabled activist teams also conducted peer support groups and other activities for over 4,000 youth with disabilities and built dozens of ramps, creating access to public buildings and schools.

In 2004, with support from the Organization for Security

Ever Widening Circle

This annual event, produced in partnership with Culture!Disability!Talent! (CDT), showcases a diverse line-up of professional performers with disabilities. Over the past nine years, performances have included comedian Josh Blue, the Blind Boys of Alabama, composer and pianist Matt Savage, and internationally renowned AXIS Dance Company, comprised of dancers with and without disabilities.

Ever Widening Circle brings together friends of the disability community to celebrate disability culture and battle negative stereotypes of disabled people. The event also serves as a model for presenting entertainment that is accessible for all audiences.

For more information, contact Executive Director Kathy Martinez, kathy@wid.org.

and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), WID and Perspektiva expanded the project to include teams from Georgia and Abkhazia. Despite the current conflict between their governments, these two teams successfully participated in training seminars together and successfully carried out all project activities. Both teams produced videos reflecting the experience of persons with disabilities in Georgia and Abkhazia that were broadcast together on national television throughout Georgia and Abkhazia. WID is currently seeking funding for a new project that will continue to support the cooperative relationship established by these teams. This new project, Wheelchair Diplomacy: Building Peace by Building Wheelchairs, will help disability NGOs in Tbilisi and Sukhum/i build and operate two wheelchair-producing micro-businesses while teams of disabled activists work to remove physical barriers in their communities and promote policies that ensure access for persons with disabilities in Georgia and Abkhazia.

For more information, contact Bruce Curtis, International Program Manager, at bruce@wid.org.

DisabilityWorld.org

DisabilityWorld (www.disabilityworld.org) is a unique international online magazine (e-zine), dedicated to advancing an exchange of information and expertise about the international independent living movement of people with disabilities. Published by the World Institute on Disability (WID) since 2000 and available only online, *DisabilityWorld* features a wide variety of news reports, international studies and research, new projects, interviews, book and film reviews. Since 2005, *DisabilityWorld* has focused on initiatives and activities to improve the status of the estimated 400 million children, youth and adults with disabilities living in developing countries. *DisabilityWorld* has over 30,000 regular readers from 200 countries. The site was honored with an Ashoka Changemakers Award in 2002. *DisabilityWorld* is currently published annually until regular funds are secured.

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