Viewing Disability as a Human Rights Issue

A human rights perspective views people with disabilities as equal to non-disabled people. It recognises the value of all human life. It recognises that, as humans, we all share the same roots, qualities and space, and it extends the same basic rights to everyone without exception.

Expressing our rights and recognising that we are valued members of society is essential so that we feel respected as citizens. It also ensures that our voices are heard and that our lived experiences are shared within our local communities. It means that we are protected by national and international law and policy.

In 1989, the Strasbourg Resolutions[1] set Independent Living (IL) in a human rights framework for the first time.

> "We firmly uphold our basic human right to full and equal participation in society as enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (extended to include disabled people in 1985) and consider

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[1]The Strasbourg Resolutions were the product of the European Independent Living Conference on Personal Assistance in Strasbourg, France, April 1989.

that a key prerequisite to this civil right is through Independent Living and the provision of support services such as personal assistance services for those who need them."

In 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) addressed the lack of detail relating to people with disabilities in the UN Declaration of Human Rights; it clarified and qualified how all rights apply to people with disabilities, as well as identifying the adaptations required to ensure that these rights can be accessed.[2]

The Irish government has not yet ratified the UNCRPD; we are one of the few countries to have signed the Convention but not ratified it. This is a key human rights issue for people with disabilities and families living in Ireland today.

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[2] http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150