



PRESS RELEASE

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***Making it Work* Makes Important Strides Toward Disability Rights**

NEW YORK -- Launched one year ago at the second session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the *Making it Work* initiative has made important strides in collecting and exchanging examples of good practices that have made a real difference in addressing the barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.

Making it Work is a multi-stakeholder initiative launched by Handicap International that engages partners from disability, human rights and development organizations in different regions of the world to promote effective implementation of the CRPD by identifying and exchanging good practices on key disability issues, generating evidence to improve the knowledge of decision-makers and practitioners and inspiring actions toward sustainable social and political change.

The CRPD is a groundbreaking international law that ensures persons with disabilities have access to the same basic rights enjoyed by all human beings. In most countries, however, the reality for people with disabilities differs significantly from the standards established by the CRPD and national policies.

This year, the *Making it Work* International Coordination Team held a side event on Thursday at the third United Nations Conference of States Parties to the CRPD at which five panelists discussed lessons learned from ongoing *Making it Work* projects in West Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

“We are not trying to change what you do, but [we are] encouraging the documentation and sharing of what you are doing for everyone's benefit,” said Rhonda Neuhaus, panel moderator and *Making it Work* program manager. “The CRPD will not be achieved working in isolation or only by focusing on what does not work,” she added.

Francesca Piatta, who works with Handicap International's West Africa program, presented Rights in Action, a regional initiative that seeks to promote practical, evidence-based recommendations on how to achieve inclusive local governance in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo so that people with disabilities have an active role in shaping the local policies and services that directly affect their lives.

In Guatemala, where public transportation is not accessible and safe to persons with reduced mobility, EL Colectivo de Vida Independiente de Guatemala is using *Making it Work* methodology to address the issues of accessibility, political participation and personal mobility by focusing on accessible transportation in Guatemala City.

Asdown and Fundamental Colombia are implementing a *Making it Work* project in Colombia to transform the current condition of people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, whose rights to exercise their legal capacity and citizenship are not recognized under existing Colombian law 1306,

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according to speaker Monica Cortez with Asdown. These organizations hope to introduce proposals that will amend the existing law to be congruent with Article 12 of the CRPD on legal capacity.

In the Middle East, the Disability Monitor Initiative, started in 2008 by CBM and Handicap International in cooperation with a regional steering committee, is tracking legislative change, social innovation and public policies related to disability with the goal of empowering regional stakeholders and stimulating policy change by showing good practices.

For more information, please visit the *Making it Work* website: <http://www.makingitwork-crpd.org/>.

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Handicap International works to improve the living conditions of people living in disabling situations in post-conflict or low-income countries around the world. Our programs reduce and address the consequences of disabling accidents and disease; clear landmines and prevent mine related accidents through education; respond fast and effectively to natural and civil disasters in order to limit serious and permanent injuries and assist survivors with social and economic reintegration; and advocate for the universal recognition of the rights of the disabled through national planning and advocacy. Handicap International is a co-founder of the Cluster Munition Coalition and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which was awarded the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.