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Workshop 7

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## Living independently and included in the Community. Independent Living Movements as Key for Implementation of Article 19

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### **Abstract:**

Article 19 of the UNCRPD sets a target in which persons with disabilities are able to live in community, not in residential institutions, with assists of personal assistants. Toward this target, independent living summit has been organized at every DPI World Assembly. Independent living movements are taken places widely in the world, and promote establishment of IL centers in DPI regions, such as, South Africa in African region, Costa Rica in central and South America, and several countries in Asia-Pacific. In this workshop, we present achievements of IL centers in the world, and exchange information toward our target.

These are major components of IL movement: (a) Personal assistance service, (b) Peer-counseling, (c) System change, (d) Accessibility, (e) Realization of independent living in the community with support, (f) Legislation at national and municipal level (e.g. Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities)

### **(1) How to Establish Independent Living Center**

The most of founders of IL centers have experience of living at residential institutions. I also lived at a rehabilitation institution for two and half years. Institutions strip off the independence of residents and force them to live under medical model. If we reject the living at the institutions or dependence to family members, we only have one option: we organize supporters, establish IL center, and start independent living in community by changing public support system. Leaders of IL centers never want to live in the institutions again, but have strong will to live in community even without enough public supports.

I am also one of such leaders. I could not live by myself without assists of personal assistants in many aspects of daily living, such as, toileting, bathing, eating, changing clothes, transferring to the bed and so on. I organized volunteers when the system of personal assistant service was not yet arranged.



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## Living independently and included in the Community.

There is misunderstanding that IL movements belong to developing countries. In reality, many strong leaders are emerging in developing countries, such as, Pakistan, Nepal, Kenya, Rwanda, or Mongolia, and committing for establishment of IL centers. They also have so strong will of international solidarity that are willing to support establishment of IL centers in other countries following their success. They expect persons with disabilities in other developing countries also enjoy fruits of IL and, hence, offer supports to other disability leaders for establishment of IL centers.

### (2) Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities by IL Center

IL centers have developed the program for empowerment of persons with disabilities. In the program, staffs with disabilities of IL centers assist persons with disabilities who have been powerless at institutions or family's care to aware "they have capacity to live independently by changing society." With manuals of peer-counseling and independent living program, IL centers support persons with disabilities to learn relationship building with personal assistants and skills for living in community. Due to manuals, every IL center in the world can provide same quality of service.

### (3) Achievements

International organizations, such as, the World Bank, JICA, or WHO start to support IL centers. In Asia, APCD (Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability) was established 12 years ago. With assist from APCD, now more than 10 countries in Asia-Pacific region have IL centers. In Japan and Korea have more than 100 IL centers respectively. In Thailand, more than 15 IL centers were established with supports from municipals. In Malaysia, Federal government is planning to support establishment of 7 IL centers. Establishment of IL centers in other countries, such as, Pakistan, Nepal, Mongolia, Cambodia, Philippines, or Myanmar also proves independent living is possible in developing countries. This workshop shows that DPI has potential to lead IL movements in all over the world by promoting IL centers its each region.