



PRESS RELEASE

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AUCD: Dawn Rudolph drudolph@aucd.org
U.S. Department of State: eca-press@state.gov

AUCD Launches International Fellowship Program on Inclusive Education

SILVER SPRING, MD – The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston will implement the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) International Fellowship Program**, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The goal of this new exchange program is to promote the growth of future leaders in inclusive education in countries and communities across the globe. The program will honor the work of former Senators Bob Dole and Tom Harkin in the field of disability rights and inclusive education.

“This international fellowship program not only commemorates the accomplishments of two of our greatest champions for disability rights, but will prepare the next generation of global leaders in inclusive education for their critical roles,” said **Andrew Imparato, AUCD’s Executive Director**.

The program will enable disability rights leaders from different countries to exchange and implement best practices for inclusive education, building ties across borders while strengthening engagement in issues of strategic importance to U.S. foreign policy, including human rights and rule of law.

The new program will support 20 mid-career professionals from Kenya, Tanzania, Brazil, and Peru, selected through a competitive process, to participate in a four-week intensive leadership institute where they will learn about the U.S. disability experience, inclusive education, and workplace culture. Fellows will be divided into two cohorts scheduled for mid-April through May 2017 and October through mid-November 2017. The core of the program is an individual internship with a UCEDD that addresses a key policy or practice related to disability and education in the Fellow’s country and local communities.

Internship experiences will be complemented with weekly leadership seminars, mentorship, and community service.

As part of the internship, the Fellows will work with their host on devising a follow-on plan that includes a technical assistance visit by a host staff member to the Fellow's country, intended to facilitate sustainability and longer-term impact of the Fellow's internship project.

Staff at AUCD and ICI are pleased to have the opportunity to cultivate global partnerships that nurture the growth and improvement of inclusive education in countries of high need and strategic concern. The ADA International Fellowship Program will reflect AUCD's and ICI's shared commitment to strengthening societies that are fully inclusive of individuals with disabilities in all areas of life, including education.

For more information, contact Dawn Rudolph at 301-588-8252 or drudolph@aucd.org, or eca-press@state.gov for the U.S. Department of State.

About AUCD

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), located in Silver Spring, MD, promotes and supports a national network of interdisciplinary centers on disabilities. The members of AUCD represent every U.S. state and territory and include 67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), 52 Interdisciplinary Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Programs and 15 Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRC). Together, these organizations advance policies and practices that improve the health, education, social, and economic well-being of people with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and their communities, in support of independence, productivity, and healthy and satisfying quality of life. The Institute for Community Inclusion is a UCEDD based at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1000
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-588-8252

<http://www.aucd.org>
aucdinfo@aucd.org
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