

# ESCIF Workshops Summary

Nottwil, Switzerland, 26.8.2021

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This document summarises the statements and views of the workshop participants and does not contain statements by the authors.

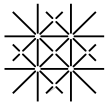
## Workshop 1: Participation in domestic CRPD processes and in the implementation of the CRPD for organisations

### 1. Main barriers for participation

- Most of the participants are not aware of the situation in their own countries. Their impression is that they are not (enough) being heard in the political process.
- There are not enough financial resources for organisations of PWD to participate.

### 2. Measures to improve participation

- PWD organisations need resources and the help of specialized lawyers in order to professionalize their interventions in the political process.
- Awareness raising and promotion of inclusive thinking.
- Education in schools about PWD (who they are, what discriminations they are confronted with, what an inclusive society means).
- Promotion of self-representation capacities for PWD (PWD in politics!).
- More resources are also to be invested in science, in order to find solution that help create an inclusive society.
- PWD have to take more responsibility; they need to stand up more for their rights, to speak up, and not expect others to do it for them.
- Creation of alliances of organisations and PWD to enhance their impact power.
- Creation of CRPD focal points in each country.
- Timing: PWD need to intervene as soon as possible in the political process.
- States, politics and society should not only listen to PWD, they should hear what PWD and their organisations say.



## Workshop 2: Accessibility of public transport and buildings

### 1. Overall situation

#### Austria:

- To take the train, you need a lift, a key and trained staff. Often, the staff is not trained to use these devices and passengers need to be asked for additional help.
- In case of a fire, PWD are trapped as they can't use the elevator.
- Restaurants must guarantee accessibility by law, but there is no control.
- Standards are often not high enough, buildings can be categorized as accessible, but in the practice, they are not.
- An equal definition of accessibility would be good.
- There are associations that check the accessibility of buildings.
- Toilets for PWD are often used as storage rooms.

#### Croatia:

- Major cities are accessible, they have more funds and money to make accessibility possible. The problem is in the countryside, where money is missing to implement accessibility.
- Accessibility depends on the government and politics.
- There is not enough investment in making vehicles and busses etc. accessible.
- Accessibility of information is good, but not enough.

#### Denmark:

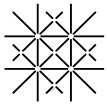
- There are still buildings with toilets on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and no elevator or only few or non-accessible elevators.
- Leisure activities like discos were not allowed for PWD in past days. Today, access to discos for PWD is allowed, but in fact often not possible, because discos are not accessible for PWD.

#### Finland:

- Accessibility in big cities is often good, it is more complicated on the countryside, especially when snowing; in practice, accessibility is only given in summertime.
- Accessibility of public buildings is good, whereas the private sector is problematic.

#### Germany:

- Adoption of new law by Jan 2022.
- "Keep it quiet as long as no one complains"; often changes or improvements are not made on their own initiative, but only when someone complains.
- Law provides that only the public sector must be accessible, there is no obligation for the private sector.
- Many public buildings were made accessible in the last years, but the access to the private sector, like dentists or physiotherapists, is often not given.
- ATMs must be accessible until 2040.



- Access to public transport is not so good as the CRPD wants it to be. Since the ratification in 2009, nearly nothing happened. Especially in rural areas, PWD are dependent on the motivation of the drivers.

#### **Netherlands:**

- Trains must be accessible by 2035, which was a compromise to ratify the convention.
- Bus companies must guarantee accessibility in order to get a licence.
- Often, bus drivers are not allowed to help for legal reasons. Therefore, PWD depend on private individuals to help to get into a bus or train.
- PWD have to order trains 4 hours in advance, in the countryside even 12 hours in advance.
- Stations are not accessible in small towns and the countryside.
- The overall situation in the cities is getting better.
- Most important barrier for accessible buildings: owners don't want to change the buildings because they don't see the need.

#### **Serbia:**

- There are improvements, but there is still a lack of accessibility.
- Access to buildings may be guaranteed, but inside the buildings, there is often no accessibility (stairs etc.).
- There is no overall solution, but only partial ones.
- Not all busses are accessible.

#### **Slovakia:**

- Busses and trains are often not accessible and must be ordered in advance.
- Accessibility is given only in cities.
- PWD don't use public transports often because they risk getting lost somewhere; they can end up at a station that is not accessible, or where there is no one to help to get in or out of the train or bus.

#### **Slovenia:**

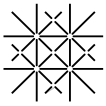
- Law provides that all buildings and public transports must be accessible within 15 years.
- Law provides that all new buildings must be accessible, but there is no implementation.
- There are big differences between cities and countryside, e.g., busses are accessible only in cities.
- Busses are more accessible than trains, which must be ordered in advance.
- Stations are not all accessible, PWD can only go to designated stations.
- There are many old buildings that are not accessible.

#### **Sweden:**

- Public transportation is accessible, but infrastructures like ticketing machines are often not accessible, because there is no punishment if they are not made accessible.

#### **Switzerland:**

- The law for people with disabilities is in force since 2004.



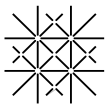
- Accessibility in public transport is not always given. It can happen that the staff doesn't know how to use the ramps.
- There are not enough accessible flats.
- It needs more awareness and information courses for architects. They should sit in a wheelchair to really experience what disability means.
- Switzerland is not where it should be in guaranteeing accessibility.

## 2. Main barriers / problems

- No control of implementation of the laws on accessibility.
- Stations, infrastructures, trains, and buses: Accessibility is not always given and often, staff is not trained.
- In many cases bus or trains must be ordered in advance.
- PWD are at high risk in case of fire and other risk situations.
- Public vs. private buildings: Accessibility is guaranteed to a greater extent in public buildings, but poorly in private buildings.
- Accessibility of old buildings and inside the buildings is often not given.
- Lack of accessible flats.

## 3. Measures and solutions

- Raising awareness, as most people don't know anything about PWD. Most people have never met persons in wheelchairs who are in charge.
- Inclusion in society generally.
- Equal definition of accessibility.
- Increase of parliamentary and political participation of PWD.
- Little measures can create big progress.
- Fines for not guaranteeing accessibility are important.
- Information about accessibility on every website of public buildings as well as information about accessible toilets.
- Accessibility norms (for architects etc.) are very important.
- There should be more trainings for architects on accessibility. They should sit in a wheelchair to really experience what disability means.
- Control of accessibility on construction plans and in buildings should be mandatory, best done by peers.
- "Blacklist" of restaurants that don't guarantee accessibility has a positive effect as no restaurant wants to be on that list.
- City vs. countryside: public transport in cities is mostly accessible, whereas it is not in the countryside.
- Buses should provide a guarantee of accessibility to get a licence.
- Only one toilet for everyone would be a good solution. There often have to be separate toilets for men, women, PWD etc. In fact, there is often not enough space for so many different toilets. One toilet that is accessible for everyone would be better (like for example at the highway service areas in Italy).



## Workshop 3: Accessibility and Participation in the Labour Market

### 1. Too easy to retire

Social security systems encourage to stay home and make it too easy not to work, getting money even without working. Often, there are financial cuts when working. This lowers the motivation of PWD to stay or get back into the labour market.

Personal assistance is like a “golden cage” so you don’t have to work.

Overall, the social security systems create no incentives to work again or work more.

An idea for PWD to stay in the labour market and in the social environment of work is a mandatory minimum work (beginning at 1 hour / week), as soon as the health status allows it.

### 2. Support during and after rehabilitation

The rehabilitation time is getting shorter, and many PWD are not ready to get into the labour market again at the time rehabilitation ends. Needs differ with time and when the PWD gets ready to get back into the labour market, there is no support anymore.

There should be more focus on help after rehab to get into work, like job coaching or promotion of self-employment.

### 3. Equal work conditions / flexibility

- Equal pay is not guaranteed.
- There is a lack of flexibility of working conditions (like worktime, half-time retirement etc.).
- Sheltered workplaces = “modern slavery”.
- Transition from sheltered workplaces is often not working or very complicated.
- There should be a dismissal prohibition (for example for 2 years after accident).
- There are still lot of barriers in higher education.

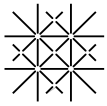
### 4. Information and awareness raising

It is of high importance to raise awareness in the public sector and in private companies. Often, employers don’t know about the possibilities of employing a PWD or about accommodations and financial support. Money is often not so much a problem, the mental barriers of employing a PWD weigh higher.

There are lots of prejudices, like the underestimation of capabilities or wrong assumptions on working conditions like sick days, part-time work etc.

It is therefore important to focus on the “right” information about PWD, on the positive aspects, like increased loyalty and commitment. The keywords for awareness raising are: Patience, tolerance and understanding.

There is a great need for more coaching, training and information of employers and co-workers. Inclusion should be a part of life from the start, by teaching about inclusion and disability at schools.



## 5. Quotas or incentives?

In some countries, quotas exist for the public and the private sector. Their goals are not always achieved. Either they are not implemented and controlled, or many private employers rather pay fees or extra taxes instead of employing PWD.

Another problem is, that there is too little differentiation of the type of disability: employers tend to only employ people with a “slight” disability and are fulfilling their duties anyway.

In countries without quotas, financial incentives, subventions or compensations and private initiative and engagement to promote employment of PWD show very positive effects, especially when paired with awareness raising.

As quotas don't always work, there should be more financial incentives, subventions or compensations for companies employing PWD.

## 6. Accommodations

For many companies, accommodations or adjustments often are or seem too complicated to apply for or to implement. There needs to be more support and information for companies and easier ways to get it.

## 7. Inequalities because of employment status

There are inequalities in regard to the employment status at the time the disability occurs:

- Companies are more obliging to people who get their disability during their work.
- In general, staying in the labour market is easier when you already have a job. If you get disabled when not employed, it is very difficult to get back into the labour market.
- Car or personal transport or a second wheelchair are often only accorded to people who are working. If out of work, you lose your right to personal transport.

## 8. Others

- There is no real consistency in politics, there are lots of declarations and principles that sound good in theory, but are never implemented in the practice.
- There are still many physical barriers in many companies.
- Funds for the support of PWD in the labour market are not adequately allocated.
- There are great differences in getting and staying in the labour market between different disabilities (physical – psychic).