

Main challenges for children and adults with disabilities in Latvia

Association "Latvian Movement for Independent living"

The Latvian Umbrella Body For Disability Organisations
SUSTENTO

Latvian Child Welfare Network

UNCRPD:
Article 19, 24,
7, 27

Sustainable
development
goals: 4, 8, 11

CONTEXT

- According to Eurostat, the rate of persons with disabilities at **risk of poverty or social exclusion** in Latvia is one of the highest in the **EU 42.5% vs 30.1% in the EU**;
- Latvia still has a **high number of individuals placed in institutional settings** – in 2018, 7046 persons with disabilities, including 256 children;
- Alternatives for institutional services are limited;
- The overall unemployment rate in Latvia over the last 4 years have been decreasing while the unemployment rates of people with disability have been increasing.

Challenges

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND EARLY INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

- Lack of **accessible and qualitative early intervention services** for children with disabilities;
- **No coordinated information on the available support;**
- **Lack of adjusted housing and financial support for necessary adjustments;**
- **Insufficient material support;**
- **Flawed assistant services.**

Challenges

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND INTERESTS

- **Inclusive education:**
 - **54** special education institutions in 2018;
 - 2016/2017 **58.9% children** with disability **received education in a segregated special education institution;**
 - Oftentimes statistic regarding children with disabilities in inclusive/mainstream schools isn't clear because children with learning and behavior difficulties have been included.
- **Child participation and involvement in decision making.**

Challenges

DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION

- **EU Fund-driven** deinstitutionalisation process;
- **Lack of quality assurance** and independent monitoring of the deinstitutionalization process;
- **Lack of specialists** in order to realize the deinstitutionalisation plans;
- **Transinstitutionalization.**

Challenges

FRAGMENTATION OF COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

- **Planned services don't meet the needs of people with disability;**
- **Responsibilities for funding new and existing services are divided between the State and municipalities;**
- **Lack of services for persons with severe disabilities.**

Challenges

EMPLOYMENT

- **Day-care centres** for persons with intellectual disabilities are rather **focused on free time activities** than on the necessary development of employment skills to be included in the labour market;
- There is no clear **transition process** for a youth with disabilities from education to employment;
- **No assisted employment** opportunities;
- **Disinformation** among society and employers **regarding the employment law** and the rights of people with disability;
- The profile of unemployed person of disability – 50+ with **secondary vocational education** .