

Promoting Disability Rights in Albania Fastfacts



MATTERS OF FACT

The project will support the Government of Albania to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol

A legal and policy framework to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention will be developed

Around 100 civil servants and professionals will be trained on issues related to disability rights

The refurbishment of a limited number of public buildings so that they are more accessible for persons with disabilities will be undertaken

An awareness-raising campaign on the rights of persons with disabilities outlined in the Convention will be undertaken in 12 regions in partnership with national and local government, the judiciary, media, the business community and civil society



Photo: Meeting with civil society representatives in Vlora.

Support Programme on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The project "Promoting Disability Rights in Albania, Support Programme on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" aims to strengthen national capacities to achieve the social inclusion and promote the rights of persons with disabilities through supporting Albania to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. The Convention sets out the legal obligations of UN Member States to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

The project follows a human rights-based approach to encourage cooperation between policy-makers, public institutions, civil society organizations, the business community and the media to create an enabling environment for appropriate policy development to guide the implementation of the Convention. Project activities include: providing technical assistance for assessing the existing national legal instruments against the requirements and provisions of the Convention; establishing an action plan to ensure the implementation of measures outlined in the Convention; assisting national monitoring mechanisms to become

operational. In addition, the project will conduct a series of trainings/workshops on disability rights as enshrined in the Convention, while designing and conducting an awareness-raising campaign to make Albanian citizens aware of the provisions outlined in the Convention.

The project will also undertake a series of pilot initiatives to improve the infrastructure accessibility of selected public buildings to ensure that facilities and services open or provided to the public are also open to persons with disabilities on an equal basis.

During 2010, the project focused on designing a training package which included the translation of two materials, 'Human Rights Yes' and 'Monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities-Guidance for human rights monitors', and the publication of the 'Handbook for Parliamentarians on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol'. Further, two manuals 'Human Rights of People with Disability, the Convention and the Albanian current legislation on disability' and 'Practical implementation of the Convention by disability service providers' have also been produced.

In addition, 13 persons, out of which only 2 were non-disabled, have been trained as trainers for the implementation of the Convention. In February 2011, in Elbasan, 95 stakeholders representing the government, judiciary, media, business and civil society participated in training workshops tailored to their respective roles on promoting disability rights. In the same region, 100 students also took part in an open debate to make them aware of and knowledgeable about the social inclusion of disabled persons.



Photo: Raising awareness of the social inclusion of disabled people among students in Elbasan.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international treaty that identifies the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the obligations on States parties to the Convention to promote, protect and ensure those rights. The Convention was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century and entered into force on 3 May 2008.

The Convention is a human rights instrument with an explicit social development dimension. The purpose of the convention is 'to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity' (Article 1)

The Convention marks a "paradigm shift" in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and

social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free, and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

The Convention adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced

The Optional Protocol establishes two procedures aimed at strengthening the implementation and monitoring of the Convention. The first is an individual communications procedure allowing individuals to bring petitions to the Committee claiming breaches of their rights; the second is an inquiry procedure giving the Committee authority to undertake inquiries of grave or systematic violations of the Convention.

Guiding Principles of the Convention

Article 3 of the Convention sets out the General Principles that apply to the enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities. These are:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices and independence of persons
- Non-discrimination
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- Equality of opportunity
- Accessibility
- Equality between men and women
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

*For further information, please contact:
Mirela Bylyku, National Project Manager
Mobile: (+355) 69 40 33 573, mirela.bylyku@undpaffiliates.org*