

Center for Independent Living Serbia 1996-2006... and further on



Instead of introduction

Center for independent living of people with disabilities of Serbia was founded in 1996.

At that time, it gathered a small group of people who had different types of disabilities but a common wish: to start working something new. The «new» was the idea on independent living which, along with Gordana Rajkov, sailed in from the faraway Ireland, and determined the future logo of the Center. Being aware of the vagaries of waters we would sail, we were determined to build a secure harbor in Belgrade, for starters. The foundations were set by: **Gordana Rajkov**, President at that time; **Stojan Nastic**, Vice-President at that time; **Damjan Tatic**, Secretary General; **Andjelka Bistrovic Nastic**; **Lepojka Carevic Mitanovski**; **Aleksandra Haravan**; **Slobodan Mitanovski**; **Borivoje Ljubinkovic**; **Branislav Rajic Pop**; **Radomir Rasa Stojanovic** and **Irena Spasojevic**.



Today, the Center has been led by: **Borivoje Ljubinkovic**, President; **Damjan Tatic**, Secretary General, **Gordana Rajkov**, coordinator for development and international cooperation; **Momcilo Stanojevic**, office manager; **Gorjana Gordic**, logistics coordinator. From the original group, Stojan and Pop are unfortunately no longer with us,

Andjelka and Aleksandra do no live in Serbia anymore, and Rasa and Irena build independence in their own way. In the meantime, the new harbors have been raised, and the new sailors are continuing to pave the way to "the idea whose time has come" and which has celebrated the golden jubilee in the World.

They are **Vojislav Mladenovic**, coordinator of the branch-office in Smederevo; **Dimitrije Gligorijevic**, coordinator of the branch-office in Jagodina; **Svetislav Marjanovic**, coordinator of the branch-office in Leskovac; **Predrag Cikaric**, coordinator of the branch-office in Krusevac; **Katica Randjelovic**, acting coordinator of the branch-office in Nis. Our ten years give us strength to still build the World in which people would be valued because of their differences because it is exactly what enriches all of



On initial mission and goals

The Center has based its work on the familiar principle known as cross-disability, meaning that it gathers people with different types of physical disability, primarily, connected by common needs and interests.

Today the Center acts from the nucleus in Belgrade and five branch-offices in other towns of Serbia, working on promoting the philosophy of independent living of persons with disabilities and creating conditions for its implementation in Serbia. Accordingly, the mission defined at the beginning, has been conducted via work on the goals which include:



- ◆ **Advocacy** for creating basic civil and human rights of persons with disabilities
- ◆ **Promoting social** approach to disability in all the segments of social life
- ◆ **Affirming abilities of persons with disabilities**, the development of their potentials and personality
- ◆ **Testing and promoting new services** for the support of persons with disabilities - Personal Assistance Service
- ◆ **Awareness raising** on the need for creating the accessible environment, including housing and transportation
- ◆ **Working on the double discrimination reduction and promotion of the rights of women with disabilities**

The Center finances its activities by developing and conducting different projects:

Why did we gather?

The basic idea we have gathered around in the Center is the philosophy of independent living of persons with disabilities. This philosophy and movement were established in the late 1960s, when the people with different types of disabilities gathered in America, in order to form the movement for civil rights and protest against the clinical way of living in nursing homes, the unadjusted educational and employment system - practically, against all the spheres of their lives. Their basic request was the right to express their needs,

independent decision-making and the life outside of the restrictions offered by institutions, self-determination, support system control, assistance and inclusion in the processes of decision-making in all issues regarding disabilities. These are the basic principles of the movement for independent living of people with disabilities which was transferred from America to Europe.

The independent living concept is aimed at giving opportunities to people with disabilities to have control over their own way of living, which is given to other people by nature. Independent living also means living in one's own home - where we independently choose whom and how often we want to see somebody. We can fulfill the right to our privacy and everyday life only when we live in our home. Independent living also means to be in the position of achieving the absolute maximum in independent decision-making. The next factor of independent living is the access to information, counsels and resources necessary to determine our own life. These are the counsels and experiences which a person with



disability should exchange with another one, the so-called peer-counseling.

At the time of establishing our Center, in the middle of 1996, the social approach to the disability phenomenon and the philosophy of independent living was completely new in Serbia. The traditional medical approach to disability was built in the institutions' work as well as in most of the organizations of people with disabilities. Most of the social services for persons with disabilities were the way professionals had established them and not the way the direct beneficiaries expected them to be. Changes in viewing persons with disabilities as victims and passive care receivers were needed to be made. New support structures were necessary to be built, the ones in which persons with disabilities were active beneficiaries of the service they could influence on their own. Assistance that would enable persons with disabilities to develop and lead their personal life was needed.

We, who gathered in the Center, wanting a change, fervently accepted the principles of the social approach to disability which do not see the causes of difficult functioning of persons with disabilities only in impairment and disability, but in the attitudes of the people around us and unadapted living and social surroundings, which enables the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community life.

How did we work?

Working on the realization of our goals, we used different methods - organizing campaigns, conducting researches, organizing national and international gatherings, organizing a number of educational activities, organizing and testing pilot services, participating in legislative and other strategic processes in the country, through the valuable local and international cooperation, extensive publishing. The greatest number of these activities was conducted via special projects, in the cooperation and partnership with different social stakeholders, such were the relevant Ministries, other organizations gathering persons



with disabilities, other non-governmental organizations at the local national and international level.

Accordingly, the Center for independent living of persons with disabilities of Serbia has become a member of the European network for independent living of persons with disabilities, ENIL, having its representative in the Executive Committee of this organization. We also cooperate with the World organization of women with

disabilities LFWD (Leadership Forum for Women with Disabilities), European Disability Forum (EDF), World Bank - Council for disability issues, Institute for independent living from Sweden (ILI), International Labor Organization (ILO), UN Development Agency (UNDP), UN Department for economic and social issues (DESA). In addition to this, our representatives have participated in a number of international gatherings on disability issues.

What is it that determines us in relation to others

Our Center is one of the first organizations in Serbia that has accepted the social approach which we have been promoting, along with the philosophy of independent living, for almost ten years, in every area of the Center's work: choice, independent decision-making, control, responsibility and the right to make a mistake.

Above all, the Center is the organization which works on advocating human rights of persons with disabilities and endeavor to influence policy making which would provide these rights. At the same time, we continuously work on awareness raising on disability issues, piloting certain solutions in practice.

The Center, with its members and activists, give the opportunity for gaining social power

through education, information, gaining skills and knowledge, which contribute to building and increasing their individual capacities and sense of self-worth. We are connected by the closeness of ideas on the realization of human rights of persons with disabilities, their social affirmation and the way of work that demands active participation of all the members in the Center's program realization.

What are our key achievements?

Through its ten-year action, the Center has managed to leave a significant impression in disability field and has influenced the:

- ◆ Attitude and policy towards persons with disabilities
- ◆ Disability movement in Serbia
- ◆ Quality of beneficiaries' life

Influence on attitudes and policy towards persons with disabilities

In the Autumn of 2001, the Center **raised the initiative for the SRY to support the initiative of Mexico in UN General Assembly for starting the work on adopting the Convention on rights of persons with disabilities.** This initiative was accepted and since 2003, Damjan Tatic, MA, Secretary General, as the expert of Serbia and Montenegro, has participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee Work Group that has been preparing the Convention draft.



In the Summer of 2002, during the negotiations on the draft of Constitutional Chart of Serbia and Montenegro, the Center sent a proposal **for discrimination based on disability to be explicitly prohibited by the highest legal act of the State Union.** At the beginning of 2003 the parliaments of Serbia, Montenegro and SRY, adopted the Chart on minority and human rights of Serbia and Montenegro, which forbids discrimination based on physical and intellectual

disability by Paragraph 3, Article 3, which is the first time for the rights of persons with disabilities to be mentioned in the highest constitutional document of our country.

Through **conducted and published researches,** the Center has also contributed to the creation of the analyses and documentation from different areas of persons with disabilities which had not existed until that time.



The Center has contributed significantly to changing the approach of decision-makers, as well as the public, towards persons with disabilities in Serbia. These people have been decreasingly viewed on as passive receivers of other people's care and charity, and are regarded as active, equal citizens for which society must provide equal possibilities for full participation in all spheres of social life, in order for them to realize their human rights, develop their full potentials and give their contributions to society.

Decision-makers recognize the Center as the respectable partner whose expertise and resources should be used for the benefit of all persons with disabilities and community. The Center has managed to find partners and allies in the decision-making organs, as well as in the civil society, in expert circles, the media, at University.

Influence on the disability movement in Serbia

Due to the Center's work so-far, many people with disabilities are empowered, many of them have gained new knowledge and skills, regained their self-confidence and self-respect. People with disabilities are less *invisible citizens* and have been demanded their rights realization more daringly.

Through its **specially developed program of education** and creation of their own **team of trainers**, made of persons with disabilities, independently or in the cooperation with other organizations, the Center has conducted over 600 seminars and workshops in over 30 towns of Serbia, for awareness raising on approaches to disability, national and international documents, public relations, advocacy skills. Along with publishing, this has contributed to the efforts to empower persons with disabilities and for them to become more active participants in advocating their rights.

Influence on the quality of beneficiaries' lives



Through its experimental pilot project of **organizing Personal Assistance Service**, as the innovative type of service for social support to persons with disabilities, the Center has not only presented and demonstrated that this type of support is possible, but also has significantly contributed to improvement of the life quality of persons with disabilities who were this project's beneficiaries.

Even though the largest changes in the life quality of the beneficiaries were happening through the Personal Assistance Service, these changes were also realized through other activities of the Center, such were **better informing** , **gaining knowledge** and feeling of value and dignity.

Publishing

Starting from the fact having information is powerful means in the work of any social group, the Center has begun and successfully continued the development of this segment on which we are very proud. Until recently, in our region, there was not much material on disability issue published. The contacts with different organizations, institutions and numerous individuals we have made after publishing certain publications, has convinced us that translating the foreign material as well as printing various reseaches and papers from our personal experiences is a worthy undertaking. The possibility that we have contributed to information exchange as well as to improvement of disability movement development in the country makes us happy. The materials we have published so far are the following:



1. We can do it - the stories of women with disabilities from the countries in development - book, translation of ILO, with he supplements of the stories of women from Kosovo and Republika Srpska, 1997
2. The set of guidebooks published by the British organization Disability Awareness in Action - DAA:
 - DAA No.2 - Giving advice and influence, informative material, translation with the supplement of the UN Standard Rules, 1997
 - DAA No. 3 - Campaigns, informative material, translation, 1997
 - DAA No. 4 - Building organization, informative material, translation, 1998
3. Social model of disability - brochure, translation, 2000
4. Access/barriers removal for full participation - brochure, translation, 2000
5. Reseach on the experimental pilot project Personal Assitance Service - brochure, 2001
6. White points - accessible public buildings in Belgrade, brochure, 2002
7. Madrid Declaration - how to fulfill social inclusion - brochure, translation, 2002

8. Key for equality - UN Standard Rules, brochure, 2003
9. Disability and sexuality/"Are they doing it to?", flier, 2003
10. Violence is the death of a soul - brochure, translation, 2004
11. Women with disabilities/obstacles for equality - brochure, translation, 2004
12. Discriminated...as a woman...as a person with disability - flier, 2004
13. Principles of the philosophy of independent living - flier, 2005
14. The price of independence - research on economic justification of financing Personal Assistance Service, book, 2005
15. The price of independence - paper , 2005
16. Experiences of independence - research on changes in the life quality of the beneficiaries and their surroundings within the SPAS project, book, 2005
17. Personal Assistance Service in Serbia - "The idea whose time has come"- brochure, 2005

Projects of the Center

The Center has conducted the largest number of its projects from its core in Belgrade and via its local branch-offices in other towns of Serbia. In addition to this, the Center's branch-offices have also conducted their project activities independently at the local level.

1. **Disability Awareness in Action (DAA)** - in the period between 1997 and 1999, the Center worked on gathering and translating the material that would be of help to the work of organizations of people with disabilities in Serbia, considering the fact that Ministry's financing had begun to take a new course. The transition had been made slowly to financing the concrete and devised activities through projects and the use of the publication on the influence on decision-makers, campaigns and organization building was supposed to contribute to this fact.
2. **Challenges of women with disabilities** - the Center is still working on promoting possibilities and capacities of people with disabilities and efforts have been made for the special place to be left for women with disabilities. Endeavoring to face the society and themselves with multy-discrimination with which they live, the Center published the translation of the book "*We can do it - the stories of women with disabilities from the countries in development*", in 1997. The additional value of this book is the fact that it is enriched with the stories of the women with disabilities from Serbia and Republika Srpska.
3. **The first experiences** - having become a member of the European network of the Centers of independent living (ENIL), the Center's representatives went on the



first study visit to the Center of independent living of people with disabilities of Austria in May, 1998. The purpose of this visit was gaining new ideas and exchange experiences regarding the work on similar issues.

4. **Irish experience** - in 1999 in the cooperation with the Center for independent living of PwD of Ireland, the Center organized the visit for a group of young people, potential activist of the Center, to spend in Ireland certain time within the study improvement and work as personal assistants for PwD, the members of the Dublin Center.
5. **Social model and barrier removal** - as the organization which was the first that began to promote the social model in the approach to people with disabilities, the Center conducted a small campaign within which the translation of the brochure *Social Model and Approach* was published in 2000 with the support of Oxfam.
6. **Organization building** - in, at the time already recognized, activity, the Center's members were beginning to realize the idea of establishing the network of local organizations/branch-offices. The Center founded the branch-offices in Smederevo, Jagodina, Krusevac, Nis and Leskovac.
7. **Experimental PA Service** - due to the fact that personal assistance is one of the pre-conditions for independent living of persons with disabilities, the Center conducted the experimental project of Personal Assistance Service for 16 beneficiaries in Belgrade from December 2000 to May 2001. The research was also conducted on the significant changes perceived even in this short period of time among the life quality of persons with disabilities, service beneficiaries.
8. **Trainers training** - in the period of time from September 2001 to May 2002, in the cooperation with Tim Tri, Civic Initiatives, the Center organized training for its activists for gaining skills of trainers/facilitators in awareness raising on the problems of PwD. Nine persons with disabilities finished this training successfully.
9. **Conferences on accessibility** - since 2001 the Center has been organizing Conferences on accessibility. The Conferences have been organized as an activity within December 3rd celebration and already from the following year, the Conference have gained the international character, gathering a great number of participants and lecturers from the countries in the region and EU every year. The name of the first Conference was *Accessible to 21st century*, and the name of the following Conferences were: *Accessible in 21st century - now (2002)*, *Access is a human right (2003)*, *Access to physical environment, information and communication and education (2004)* and *Freedom of movement - (in)accessible right (2006)*. It is our tendency for this Conferences to have a permanent character.



10. **With English to the World** - working on further education and improving the skills of its activists, the Center organized the English language course, from March to July 2002. This course was also attended by the members of other organizations of persons with disabilities. Twenty persons with disabilities finished the course



11. **Disability studies** - from January to May 2002, the project named *Disability studies* was conducted in Smederevo and Belgrade for 19 persons with disabilities. The aim of *Disability studies* was gaining skills in advocacy and lobbying for the rights of persons with disabilities. As a practical part of the project, the brochure *White points* on accessible public buildings in Belgrade was published and promoted at the Faculty of Architecture, the University of Belgrade, within the campaign, and the meetings with local authorities in Belgrade and Smederevo were organized the aim of which was changing the existing regulations.

12. **PC course** - in September 2002, the Center provided computer equipment and organized the computer training course for its members.

13. **How to acquire social inclusion** - preparing the celebration of 2003, the European year of persons with disabilities, in December 2002, the Center translated and published *Madrid Declaration* as the document which promoted this year and by the end of May 2003, organized numerous round-tables focused on the well-known sentence "Nothing about us without us" and further promotion of human rights of persons with disabilities.

14. **Key for equality** - along with publishing *Madrid Declaration*, from December 2002 to December 2003, the Center also worked on promoting other messages of 2003 - the Year of persons with disabilities - persons with disabilities want equal rights, not charity; let's create society for all; persons with disabilities are equal citizens; persons with disabilities have a right to independent living etc. Within this project, the brochure on UN Standard Rules was published and distributed to all organizations of persons with disabilities, non-governmental organizations, professional institutions, different ministries and individuals.

15. **Are they doing it too?** - making an effort to pay equal significance to all the aspects of lives of persons with disabilities, in the cooperation with Muscular Dystrophy Association of Cacak, the Center realized the project *Disability and Sexuality* from January to May 2003. A series of workshops was conducted with the subject of disability and sexuality and a flier was published.

16. **Serbia without poverty** - from August to November 2002, the Center participated in the work of the network made of 20 NGOs in Serbia working on activities regarding creating a document for the poverty reduction in Serbia. The study called

Poverty from the point of view of NGOs was worked on as well on participating in the consultative process through various informative activities and introduction of other NGOs with the definition of poverty and the process of adopting the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia.

17. **Poverty II** - during 2003, the Center continued to work in the second project of the NGO network dedicated to modulations of the objections to the Strategy draft and participating in various actions aimed at introducing citizens to the poverty problems of different citizen categories. The Center was especially engaged in developing the part of the document dedicated to the poverty reduction among persons with disabilities.



18. **SPAS** - following its path persistently, the Center started the pilot project, the Service of Personal Assistants in Serbia, financed by Development Cooperation Ireland, the Agency of the Republic of Ireland, with the recommendation of the then Ministry for social affairs of the Republic of Serbia. The project lasted from December 2002 to October 2005. The idea was promoting a new alternative type of support for persons with disabilities in Serbia, the service directly controlled by its beneficiaries, spreading the philosophy on independent living and promoting full civil participation of persons with disabilities in society.



In the above-mentioned period, with the support of the Fund for social innovations of Serbia, the project enabled working engagement for 73 personal assistants for 70 persons with disabilities, in Belgrade, Smederevo, Jagodina and Leskovac. In the meantime, it also gained the support from the new Ministry of labor, employment and social policy of Serbia. The justification of such service for persons with disabilities in Serbia was presented in the form of the analysis of economic justification and participatory action research. As the

authentic visual material that would show the achievements of the project, the radio jingles and four TV spots were made, as well as the documentary *The idea whose time has come* the protagonists of which were the beneficiaries and assistants, project's participants.

19. **SHARE SEE** - in February 2003, the Center became a partner in the *regional project* of Handicap International, SHARE SEE, which is conducted, in addition to Serbia (including Kosovo), in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Macedonia. The

project is intended for empowerment of organizations of persons with disabilities through the programs of education, training, consultation, giving information and financing smaller projects. Through this project, the Center has established the cooperation with new organizations in the region and many local organizations of persons with disabilities in Serbia. In addition to this, it has widened its work field and increased its visibility. Within the SHARE SEE program, three Conferences on accessibility have been held so far, as well as the National Conference of PwD of Serbia, "Unified Voice", the organizer of which was our Center. With certain changes, it is expected for this project to last until 2007.

20. **Gender, sex, disability** - within this project, the Center worked on the further awareness raising on the phenomenon of gender and sex in the disability domain. The project was conducted from December 2003 to August 2004. In addition to publishing publications and propaganda material, a few educational workshops were held in five towns of Serbia, as part of this project
21. **Specificity of the poverty of persons with disabilities** - the project was conducted in Smederevo, Jagodina and Leskovac, from January 2004 to January 2005. As part of this project, the Poverty Reduction Strategy was promoted and the research on specificity of the poverty of persons with disabilities and additional disability expenses were organized.
22. **Empowering activists' capacities and advocacy** - together with a partner organization IC Lotos from Tuzla, the Center conducted the project *Advocacy and Leadership* from September 2003 to April 2005. This was the regional project, which through the process of education and practical work included 32 PwD from 15 organizations of PwD from Serbia and both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our partner on this project was also the Catholic Relief Service (CRS), with their offices in Sarajevo and Belgrade. Within this project, the Conference called "A step towards Europe" was organized in Sarajevo, in March 2005. 150 representatives who participated in this Conference, for the first time had a discussion on creating specific conditions in disability area, as constitutional part of general conditions for joining the European Union of the countries of South-East Europe.
23. **From disability benefits to profitable employment** - in the period between May and October 2005, the international labor organization (ILO) conducted the analysis of the status of PwD in the countries of South-East Europe. The Center was a partner for Serbia and for the purpose of this analysis and study, the



Center's team gathered different data on the disability pensions beneficiaries, disability allowances, the existence and the number of programs for the employment of PwD financed by the Ministry of Labor.

24. **EDF-CARDS** - In June 2005, at the suggestion of the organizations of PwD at the national level, the Center took over the coordination of the project for building the capacities and national umbrella organization for Serbia, conducted by the European Disability Forum (EDF) in the region.

Who have been our donors?

1. Ministry of labor and social affairs of the Republic of Serbia
2. Ministry for social affairs of the Republic of Serbia
3. Ministry of labor, employment and social policy of the Republic of Serbia
4. Ministry of urbanism and building of the Republic of Serbia
5. Fund for social innovations
6. Department for veterans' issues, disability and children protection of the City of Belgrade
7. OXFAM, British non-governmental organization
8. Catholic Relief Service, CRS
9. International orthodox organization for help, IOCC
10. Handicap International
11. UN Development Program, UNDP
12. Development Cooperation of Ireland
13. Center for independent living of people with disabilities, Dublin
14. Disabled People's International, DPI - Europe Region
15. European Disability Forum, EDF
16. Austrian Airlines
17. Fund for open society
18. International Labor Organization, ILO



... and further

The World we live in

There are still many obstacles for people with disabilities in their everyday life. Application of the Convention on human rights and other international documents is inconsistent, and the adopted documents are difficult to be applied in practice. Today, the living environment is still inaccessible, as well as housing, transportation, access to information and institutions. More diverse equipment, adequate to technological progress is also inaccessible. There are very few support services for people with disabilities, and the rights and services that do exist does not encourage individual personal development of persons with disabilities, nor can be easily adjusted to their individual needs. Other service providers, such as NGOs and the private sector, are still not included as much



as necessary in the support system. In addition to this, the number of persons with disabilities actively involved in suggesting new solutions and the decision-making process, at both the local and state level, is still insufficient.

On the other hand, this is the time of changes offering new possibilities for work. The adoption of the UN Convention on rights and dignities of persons with disabilities is ongoing, and the process of joining EU and the obligation to introduce European standards in different society system that are supposed to prevent discrimination and secure implementation of UN Convention is topical in our country. Adopting the new strategic documents in the state is the opportunity to advocate the interests of persons with disabilities and suggest new adequate solutions.



Implementation of the European standards and guidelines especially referring to the equalization of possibilities for persons with disabilities offers a great chance for starting solve these issues in Serbia in more efficient way. In the years to come it is expected for the social welfare system reform to be conducted, the new laws in disability area to be worked on, creation and adoption of the National strategy for persons with disabilities to be worked on and the Poverty Reduction Strategy in the part referring to persons with disabilities to be conducted.

All of these should provide new possibilities for us to be included in these occurrences. These possibilities are bigger due to the fact that increasingly more decisions would be adopted at the local level in future, which would offer a chance to for us to also influence more easily the introduction of the new and of better quality services for persons with disabilities. In addition to this, all the intensional documents, adopted in the last few years, also predict active participation and consultations with representatives of persons with disabilities as the obligation of states. The respect towards persons with disabilities has been increasing at the local level. Even though among them there are still not enough experts and knowledge to equally participate in the consultations with representatives of authorities, the techologica infrastructure that makes information and knowledge accessible to people with disabilities, offering larger opportunities for our more active participation, has been improved.

What can the Center do?



For the Center, this is the time of great challenges as well as for the opportunities for efficient work. As far as this, we have gained knowledge and experience in pleading for respecting dignities and basic human rights of persons with disabilities, and we primarily know that these changes can be reached if we work together on the implementation of these principles. Expertise in disability issues, followed by the quality researches, written

materials and publications, make the opinion of the Center to be listened and respected due to the fact it is based on experience and challenges with which persons with disabilities are faced in their everyday life.

Through the successful intensional cooperation and membership in the networks of related organizatons, the Centar provides the flow of information on activities of the World disability movement, on international standards and documents, that have been created or adopted, using them as the tools in advocating, monitoring, analyzing and suggesting new legal solutions that should contribute to the improvement of the status of persons with disabilities. Knowledge on the philosophy of independent living and the disability social approach and experience in their handing down and application are good tools in this work.

After ten years of working, we have decided to conduct the participative process of the strategic planning of the further development of our organization, defining our work and the value system in the relation to the target groups the interests of which we represent, in the relation to our associates, partners and community in general.

Mission and directions of further actions of the Center

MISSION OF THE CENTER

The Center for independent living of people with disabilities of Serbia is a non-profit organization with the network of the members promoting the philosophy of independent living and the potentials of persons with disabilities, social approach to disability, advocating the rights of persons with disabilities, working as the resource center in creating and monitoring the disability policy application, testing and suggesting new solutions, conducting licensed education, making the cooperation and partner relations with important social stakeholders at the local, national and international level. The organization has been run by the persons with disabilities, and its work is based on the following values: dedication, human rights respect, innovation, partnership, tolerance and professionalism.

Our five program goals

ADVOCATING PRINCIPLES

Full participation of women and men with disabilities in all the segments of life

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes

POLICY CREATION PARTICIPATION

Policy providing independence and social inclusion of persons with disabilities

Joint work on realization of the rights of persons with disabilities

TESTING EXPERIENCE IN PRACTICE

Developed service system which support independent living of persons with disabilities

How to get to goals realization?

- In our future advocacy for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, we want to plead for implementing the philosophy of independent living and social approach to disability based on the protection of human rights of persons with
- Advocating these principles, we will develop our capacities to become the Resource Center in disability policy creation
- Through our own model of education, in compliance with the social approach and experience in handing down knowledge, its team of trainers - persons with disabilities, is planning to continue its work on awareness raising on the rights of persons with disabilities and challenges with which persons with disabilities are facing every day
- New programs for education and the study of new skills, is one of the paths we see for empowering persons with disabilities and our role in all the decision-making processes influencing our lives
- Conducted in practice and systemized knowledge for organizing the new support service for people with disabilities - PA Service, as well as the experience in organizing and managing this service, will serve us for further researching and testing new types of support and services which will help us, as persons with disabilities, provide as biger control as possible over our lives.
- We want to establish coalitions, cooperation and partnership with different organizations and institutions at the local levels, at the level of Serbia and at the international level because we know that we are one of the stakeholders in the coalition, and that we can achieve the best results only by working together. This means conducting activities but also joining others in their demands.



We know that our plans are very ambitious but also attainable. In order to provide our program development and changes realization that we want, we will have to work on providing additional support for the Center and provision of the stable financing from various sources. We will also have to develop our inner capacities, to include new and young activists - persons with disabilities, to provide new knowledge and learn from good practice examples.

