



Third Conference of the European Platform of Self-Advocates Zagreb, 4 to 6 October 2013

Conference Messages



For 3 days, more than 160 people with an intellectual disability came together to talk about and share ideas and experiences about intellectual disability.

The people taking part were asked to tell self-advocates, families, professionals and politicians what they thought about different issues.

We have learned that the challenges faced by self-advocates are the same all over Europe.

This is what we have to say.



Hear our Voices!

Violence and disability

Workshop Leader – Samantha Flood

28 persons on total – Scotland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Czech Republic, England, Hungary, Moldova, Macedonia

The workshop was about how we can identify violence and abuse and how to fight it.

Messages

For self-advocates

If abuse is happening tell someone you trust.
Don't keep it secret.
Go to schools to teach about disability.
Get them when they are young.
Talk to the police about abuse and train them.
If we do that, police can make things better.
Remind all politicians that we are all equal.

For families

Parents need to teach their children to keep safe from abuse.
Listen to us when we talk to you about abuse.
Make parents aware that abuse happens everywhere.

For professionals

Violence happens at work.
The police needs to believe more in us.
Support people to report abuse and violence.
Listen to people with intellectual disabilities.
Believe them and do something about it!



For politicians

Listen to people with ID.

Believe that abuse is happening right now – particularly in institutions.

Please do something to stop it!

Legal capacity

Workshop Leader – Ivana Gudelj

10 persons on total – Scotland, Poland, Serbia, Croatia

The workshop was about the need to fight for legal capacity.

It was about sharing good-practices and learn what to do to get it!



Messages

For self-advocates

Do everything you can to get your legal capacity back!

Fight for your rights!

Keep on fighting and facing your challenges.

Prove you can do it!

Prove that you can take your own decisions, and show that you can speak up for yourselves.

For families

Support us in things and activities that we can do on our own.

Treat us like adults!

Give us the chance to make mistakes!

For professionals

Listen to us, we are the experts!
Only we know what is best for us!
Spend more time with us, get to know us better and
listen to what we have to say.
Include us and respect our opinions.

For politicians

Change the laws so we can have legal capacity.
Give us the opportunity to sign contracts and to get married!
Provide us with the right support that will enable us
to take decisions instead of having others deciding for us.

Community living and independent living

Workshop Leader – Senada Halilcevic

31 persons on total – Croatia, Romania,
Scotland, Norway, Slovenia, Finland, England,
Macedonia, Bosnia Herzegovina

The workshop was about what we can do
to make sure that people are included
in the community.
It was also about how to support people to do that.



Messages

For self-advocates

We want more opportunities like this to share information
about community living and to learn from each other.
People with intellectual disability must know about self-advocacy
so they can advocate for their rights.
Persons with disabilities should be living in community and
make choices about their lives with minimal support.

They should have the opportunity to choose by themselves where they will live and with whom.

Self-advocacy organisations need to cooperate in advocating joint goals.

Together we are stronger!

For families

Be with us and support us so we can take decisions!

For professionals

Do not overprotect us, give us the opportunity and support so we can learn new things.

For politicians

Help people with intellectual disabilities to get out of institutions.

Don't read about us, meet us in person!

Only then you can change your attitudes!

We want Governments to ensure the support we need and that will help us to take decisions about our lives.

Increase the state role in improving living conditions for people with disabilities.

The right to start a family

Workshop Leader – Ciara Evans Lawrence

27 persons on total – Scotland, Slovenia, Norway, England, Croatia, Czech Republic, Scotland, Lebanon, Macedonia

The workshop was about the right to family life and the support people need to have their own family.



Messages:

For Self-advocates

You have the right to start a family.

People with intellectual disabilities need to speak up for themselves and ask for support about issues about relationships when they need it.

People with intellectual disabilities have the right to accessible information about sex, relationships, and parenting.

For Families

You need to respect and support parents with an intellectual disability.

Families need better support to make sure the children of parents with an intellectual disability are kept by the parents.

For Professionals

Professionals should look at what people with intellectual disabilities can do, not what they can't do.

Better training to learn how to work with parents with intellectual disabilities.

Professionals need to communicate better with people/parents with intellectual disabilities.

For Politicians

Governments need to listen to views of people with intellectual disabilities and take them seriously.

We need more health professionals to make sure people with intellectual disabilities that are parents are treated properly in hospital care.

From school to life!

Workshop Leader 1 – Luminita Caldaras

Workshop Leader 2 - Tomislav Ivaskovic

27 persons on total – Portugal, Norway, Romania, Belgium, Czech Republic, Canada, Moldova, Croatia, Bosnia Herzgovina, Poland



The workshop participants discussed about what to do when they finish school and training. It was also about the support they need to start living in their communities.

Messages:

For self-advocates

You need to desire, to invest time and to work hard to succeed.
Fight for your right to choose your school!

For families

Inside is important, do not label us.
Look behind our disability.
Families should get support to recognise the child wishes.

For professionals

Inside is important, do not label us.
Look behind the disability.
Raise awareness of society about people with disabilities.

For politicians

Inside is important, do not label us.
Look behind the disability.
Promote inclusive education and inclusive laws.
Raise awareness on society about people with disabilities.
Make sure there is bigger support,
so people with intellectual disabilities can be more successful!

The right to be me!

Workshop Leader – Tom Hoysveen

12 persons on total – Croatia, Norway, Finland

This workshop was about discrimination.
It was about the rights that are denied to us
because of our disability.

Messages:

For self-advocates, families and politicians

I have full guardianship,
so I do not have the right to work.
We need to change this.



Take down the walls

Workshop Leader – Corinne Clermont

28 persons on total – Poland, Norway, France,
Romania, Croatia, Slovenia

The workshop was about deinstitutionalisation.
It was about closing the institutions and
having a life!

Messages:

For self-advocates

Do not give up!
We are the experts; no one knows our life better than us: speak up!
Fight for your rights!



Break the walls.

Take action!

Keep the fight for your rights and tell our opinion.

For families

Stop family abuse.

Listen to what we say.

We are the experts; no one knows our life better than us: listen to us!

Trust us, let us be independent.

Treat us like adults and do not tell us what to do.

Respect our rights.

For professionals

We are the experts; no one knows our life better than us:

listen to us!

Professionals in regular schools: talk and inform about disability.

Professionals in support services: consider us as adults.

Give us information and support.

Respect our rights.

Do not speak in our name.

For politicians

Educate about disability and the rights of persons with disability.

Do not decide about us without us.

Stop putting money in institutions and invest in community living.

We are the experts; no one knows our life better than us:

listen to us!

Start inclusion early, with children at school.

There is no independence without accessibility (physical accessibility, accessibility to information,...)

Topside project: peer support and peer training

Workshop Leader – Gabriela Fronkova

9 persons on total – Czech Republic, England, Croatia

The workshop was about the ability to support others.
Everyone can be a peer supporter.



Messages:

For self-advocates

Everyone will be able to be a peer trainer.
Everyone will be able to be a peer supporter.
Everybody have more life experiences than they think.

For families

People with ID can support other people with ID.
People with ID can share their experiences with others.
People with ID want to meet with other people and spend their time together.

For professionals

Peer training provides good condition for the life-long education of people with ID.
Peer trainer can became a model for other participants of the course.
Peer trainer can help the trainer without disabilities or can teach alone.
Peer trainer need to be paid for his/her work

For politicians

Peer trainer need to be paid for his/her work
People with ID have the right to long-life education.

Making us visible

Workshop Leader –Mia Farah

18 persons on total – England, Romania, Norway, Croatia, Slovenia, Lebanon

The workshop was about the need to stop hiding people with intellectual disabilities. It was about the need to respect people and include them in all aspects of life.



Messages:

For self-advocates

Believe in yourself!

Our job is to talk with governments and educate them about the CRPD.

Speak up!

For families

Listen to us!

We are talking about our lives, but you are talking about your fears!

Let's speak the same language.

For professionals

Stop discriminating us because of our disabilities.

We are the experts.

For politicians

Make laws that will not allow teachers to refuse students because of their disabilities.

Limit the power of professionals!

Dance to express

Workshop Leader – Petra Seitz Mavar

10 persons on total – Croatia, Slovenia, Moldova

In the 'Dance to express' workshop
we learned how to express our feelings through dance.
We learned how to write our name using our body.

Messages:

For self-advocates

We can also use our body to send a message and fight for our rights that way.

For professionals

Just observe our body because we can do everything
and you will know what to do.

For families

Give us support so that we can express ourselves in every possible way.

For politicians

Dance with us.
Let's us meet together through dance.

How to make a video

Workshop Leader – Kristina Tekmetarovic

21 persons on total – Scotland, Finland,
Slovenia, Croatia, Norway, Serbia, Bosnia
Herzgovina

During the workshop, participants learned how
to make a video and edit it.



A small video was made, but it is not available for sharing.
It was a video about the workshop.
The general message from this workshop is:
We can do it!

Martial arts

Workshop Leader – Rene Petrovic

8 persons on total – Norway, Croatia, Bosnia Herzgovina

The workshop was a way to show that people with intellectual disabilities can learn and be included in karate classes.

It was about the importance of recognising your value and to be confident.



Messages:

For self-advocates

Follow your ideals!

For families, professionals and politicians

If you cannot help us, at least do not harm us!

Creative writing

Workshop Leader – Tamara Tekovic

5 persons on total – Croatia, Moldova

During the workshop, participants identify the main problems faced by people with disabilities to be included.



They have written different stories about~
the importance of accepting the difference.

Theatre

Workshop Leader – Ana Takac

13 persons on total – Portugal, Croatia, France, Czech Republic, Slovenia

Participants learned that the way you see yourself is very important
when you are asking for respect.

They've learned we need to respect ourselves first.

Only then others will respect us.

They have also learned about trust.

Messages:

For self-advocates

Trust yourself first.

Trust the group; find your place within the group.

Together we are stronger!



Plenary Session: If I had 3 wishes...

Leader: Ciara Evans Lawrence

Ciara Lawrence is sleeping.

She dreams about her life and what she wishes for.

She wishes to have a family.

A husband.

She wishes to speak up for herself
and other self-advocates.



She dreams about her friends and the things they do together.
She dreams about an inclusive society.
She wakes up and she realises that she is happy!

And she asks about the wishes of participants.

They too have wishes.

They wish to have a family.
They wish to live independently.
They wish to have a paid job.
They wish to have a dog or a pet.

We need to make their wishes come true.



Sum-up of most important messages

Self-advocates selected the messages they felt were more important.
These messages were shared at the plenary session.

1. Believe that abuse is happening right now –
particularly in institutions.
Please do something to stop it!
2. Spend more time with us, get to know us better and
listen to what we have to say.
Include us and respect our opinions.
3. Don't read about us, meet us in person!
Only then you can change your attitudes!
4. You need to respect and support parents with an intellectual disability.
5. Inside is important, do not label us.
Look behind the disability.
6. We are the experts;
no one knows our life better than us:
speak up!
7. Give us information and support.
Respect our rights.
Do not speak in our name.
8. Stop putting money in institutions and invest in community living.
9. If you cannot help us, at least do not harm us!
10. Together we are stronger!

