

Conference “Living Independently and Working Inclusively: A Nordic–Baltic Dialogue”

2 – 3 June 2026

Tallinn, Estonia

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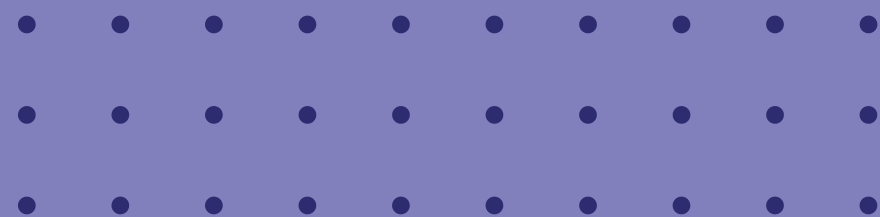


Introduction to the objectives of day 2

Meelis Joost

Chairperson of the Board

Estonian Chamber of People with Disabilities



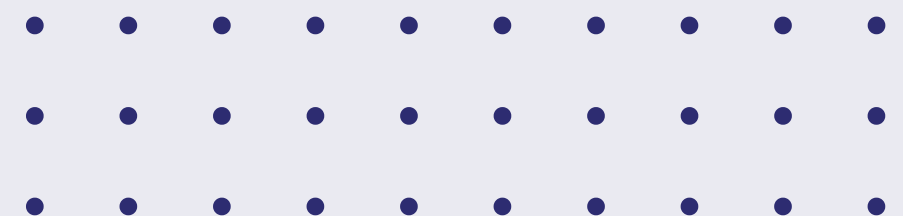
Independent living and community-based supported living, including personal assistance, accessible housing and digital solutions



Reet Asmer

Service manager
AS Hoolekandeteenused (Welfare services)

Estonia



Supporting Independent Living through Recovery Courses

Reet Asmer
AS Hoolekandeteenused
Estonia

**Services alone do not guarantee
independent living.**

Independent living is more likely when support is

- person-centred
- rights-based and
- built around people's own goals

WHAT ARE RECOVERY COURSES

- Co-creation
- Learning
- Empowerment



From
service user
active
participant



Lived experience Professionals Community

IMPACT

- Confidence
- Skills
- Choice
- Connection



Tegusama
elu kodud

202605 HKT

taastumiskursus

SYSTEM- LEVEL IMPACT

Recovery courses strengthen
existing support
and support people to use
support in ways that fit their
own goals



Independent living is not only about where people live or what services they receive.

It is about whether people have the opportunity, confidence and support to make meaningful choices about their own lives.

Recovery courses are one practical way to make
this possible.

Thank you

Independent living and community-based supported living, including personal assistance, accessible housing and digital solutions

Milana Juknaitė

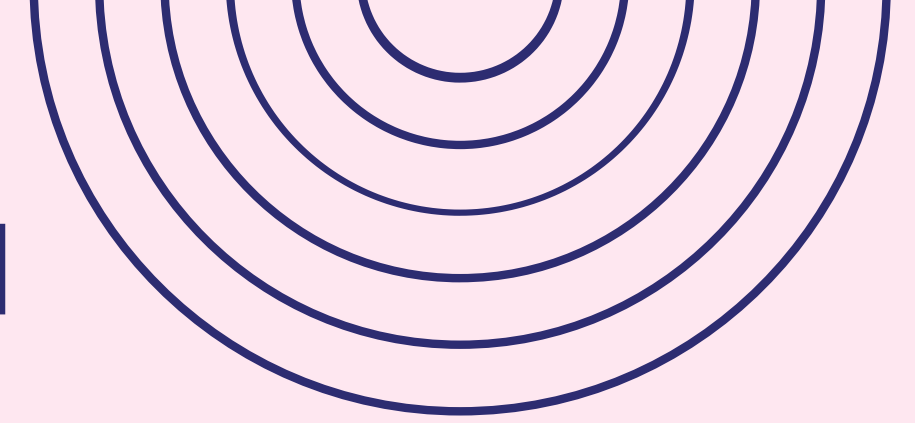
Social worker

Nepatogūs (“uncomfortable” or “inconvenient.”

Definition: uncomfortable to look at them. Uncomfortable to think about them. Even more uncomfortable not to think about them.)

Lithuania

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Youth perspectives, ensuring that the lived experiences of young people with disabilities inform policy discussions

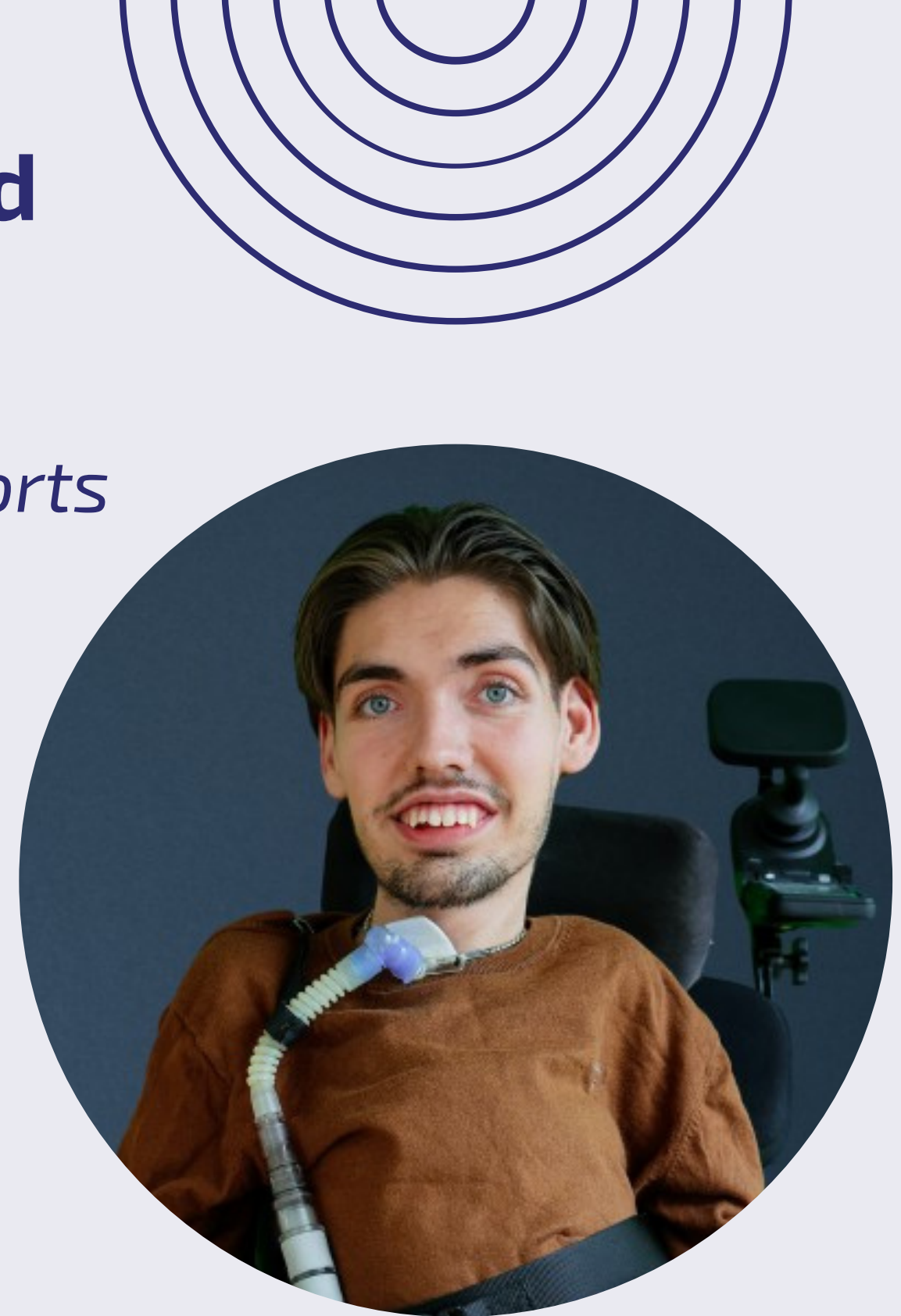
*Young people's voices and personal stories, what supports successful independent living and employment?
Meaningful participation of young people in policy development.*

William Korte

Chairperson of the board
SUMH
(Association of Young People with Disabilities)

Denmark

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SUMH: DANISH ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

UMBRELLA



Together, we are strong

Our vision is: that all young adults with disabilities should be able to live the youthhood they want.

We are different but usually challenges and possible solutions are the same.

Therefore: Together, we are strong

Areas of work

- Employment,
 - Education,
 - Social policy,
 - Sexuality
 - Voluntariness,
-
- All of it is based on Universal Design-thinking

How we understand disability

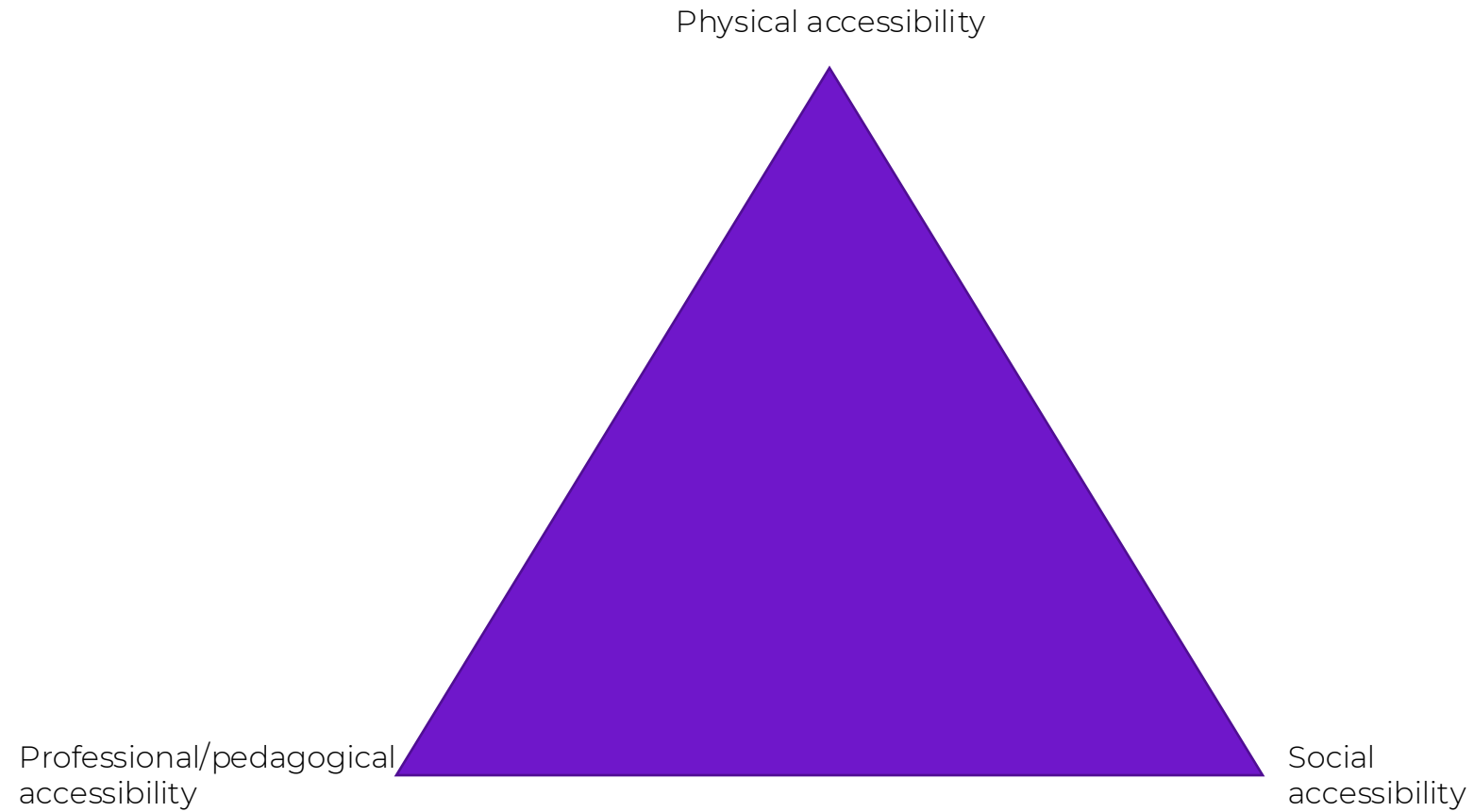
The relational disability term

- Disability + barrier = Handicap
- Disability + compensation = Equal opportunities



**Necessary for some –
beneficial for all**

Accessibility



The accessibility triangle

Physical accessibility

- You must be able to enter the room, and the room must be arranged so that you can have an actual participation and not be parked in a corner.

Professional/pedagogical accessibility

- You must be able to participate and contribute to what is happening in the room. It requires that you can understand what is happening in the room, and you are able to contribute to what is happening, as well as knowing the rules of the game and are able to play them. It requires that it is explained in a way so that one is able to be a participant and not just a spectator.

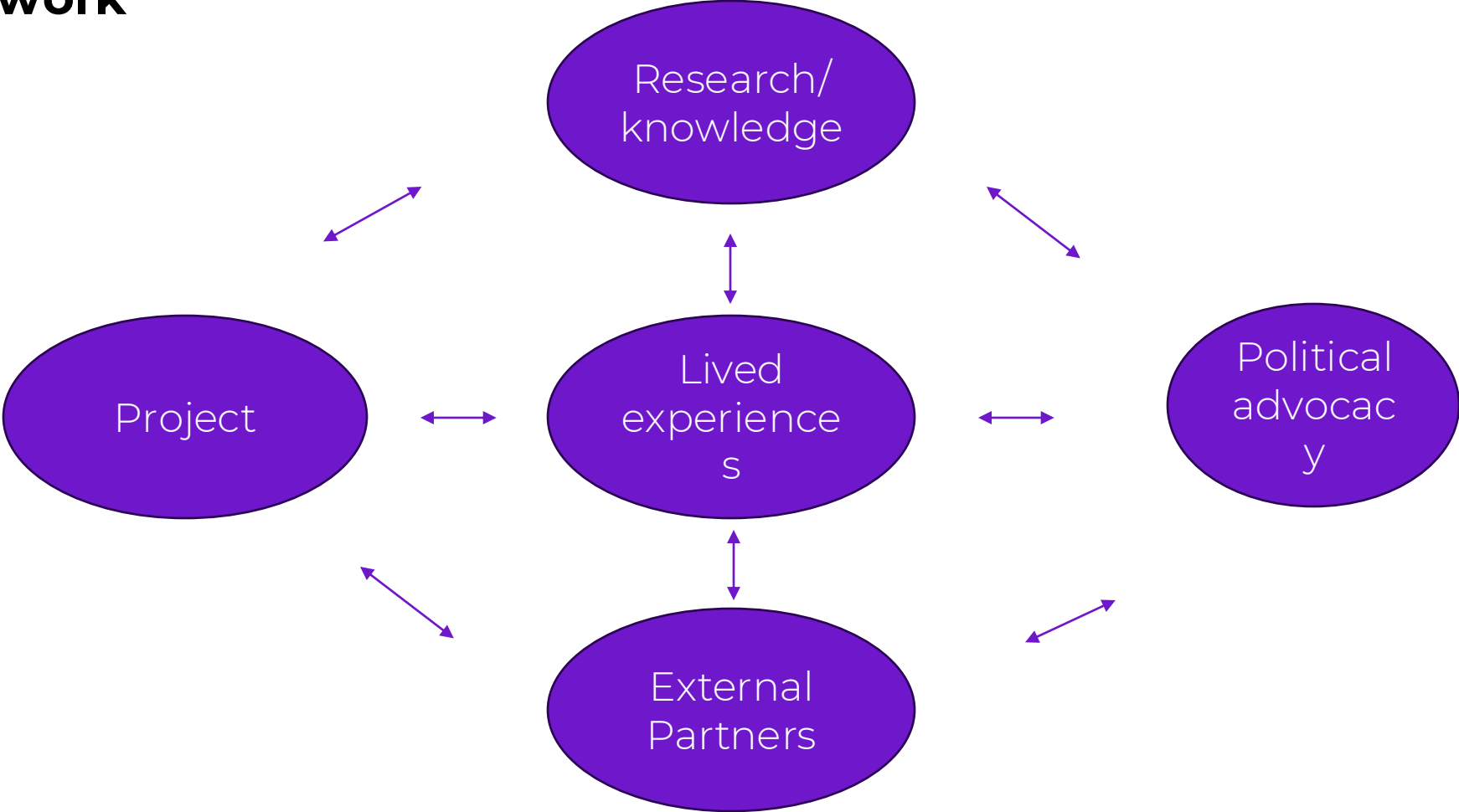
Social accessibility

- You must be able to participate in social activities and have something to contribute. The latter is achieved by having had full participation in the professional/pedagogical field, and access to the entire physical room..

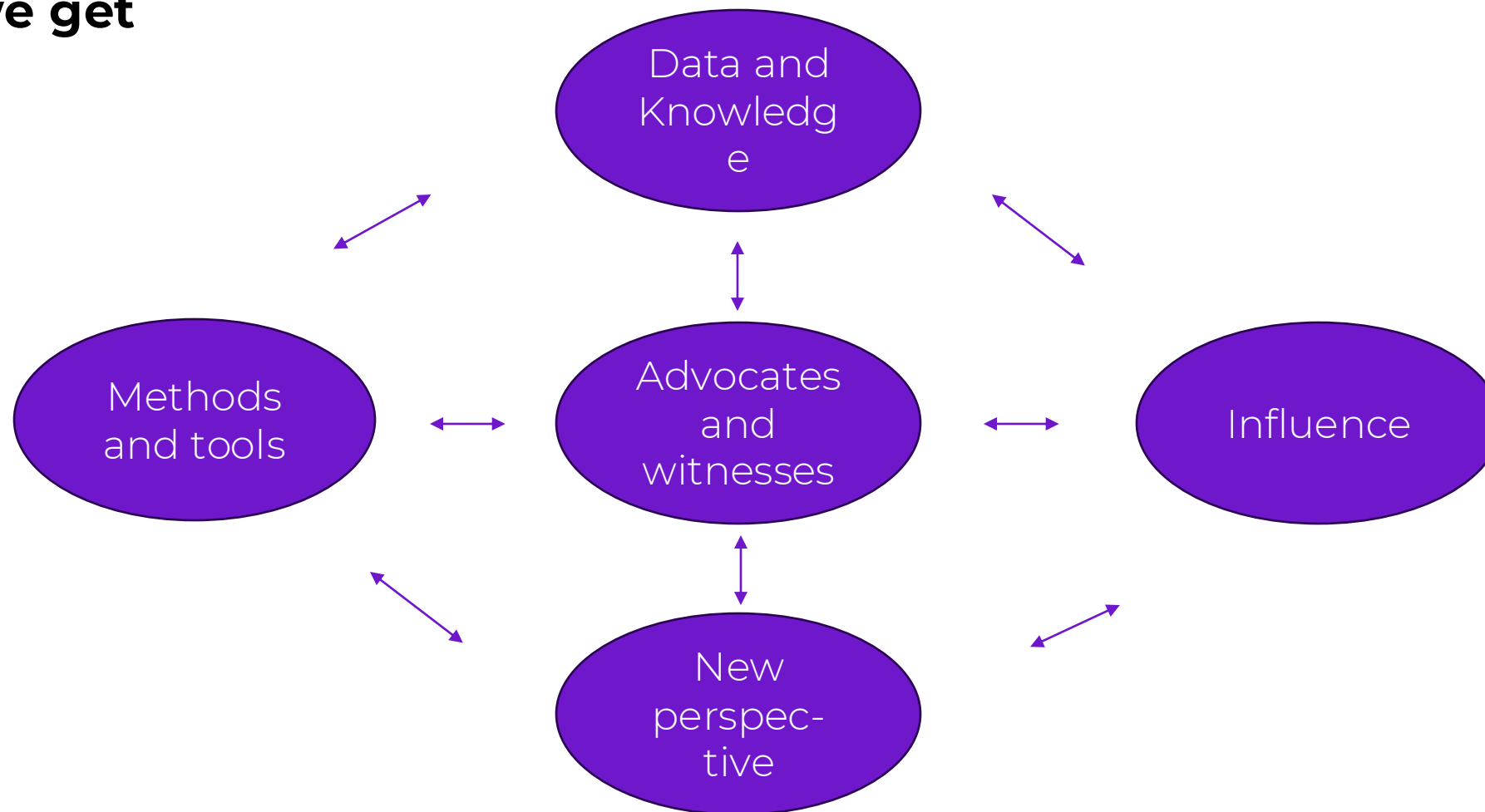
MORE THAN A VOICE



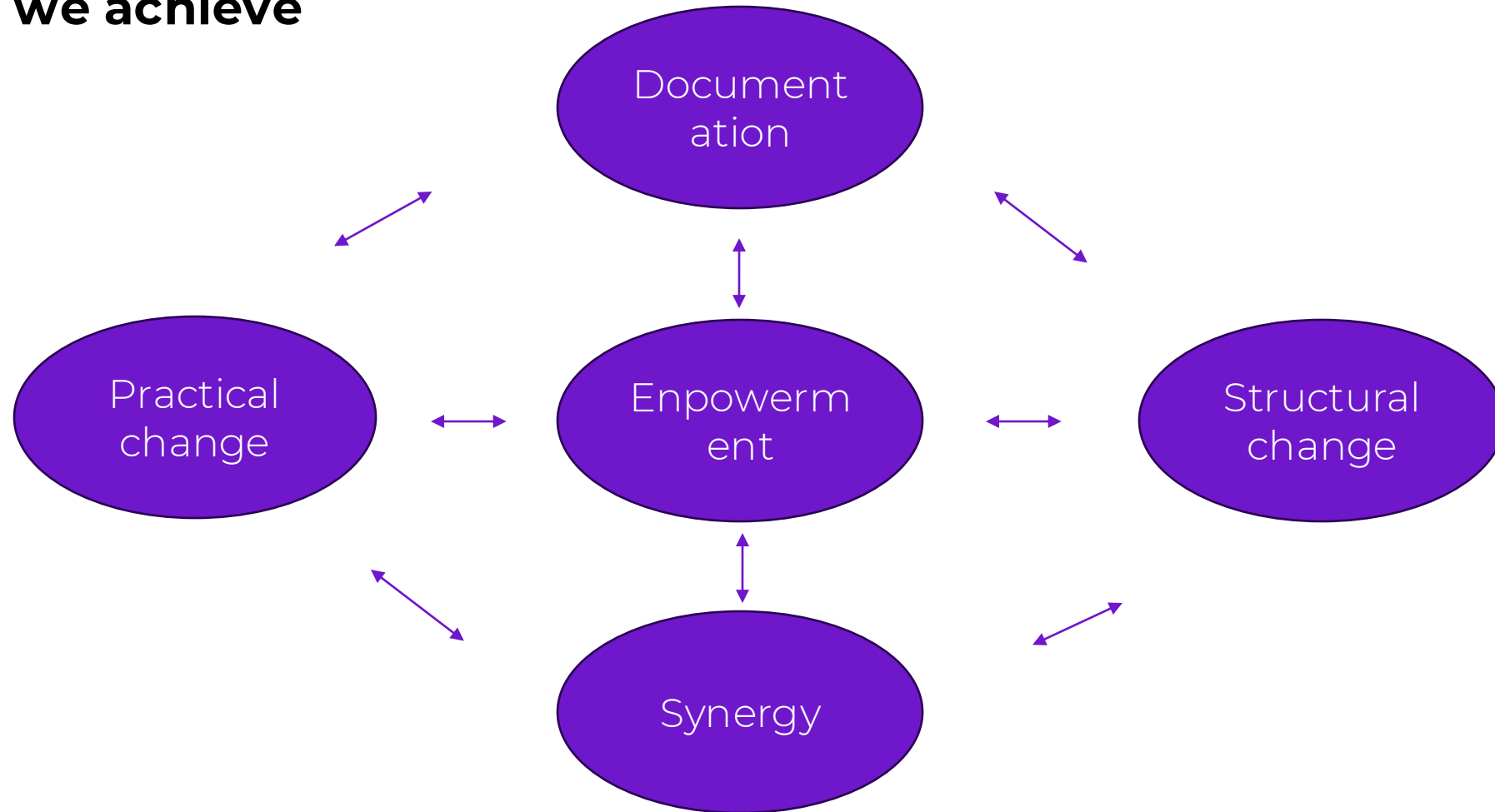
How we work



What we get



How do we achieve





ROLE MODELS TAKES

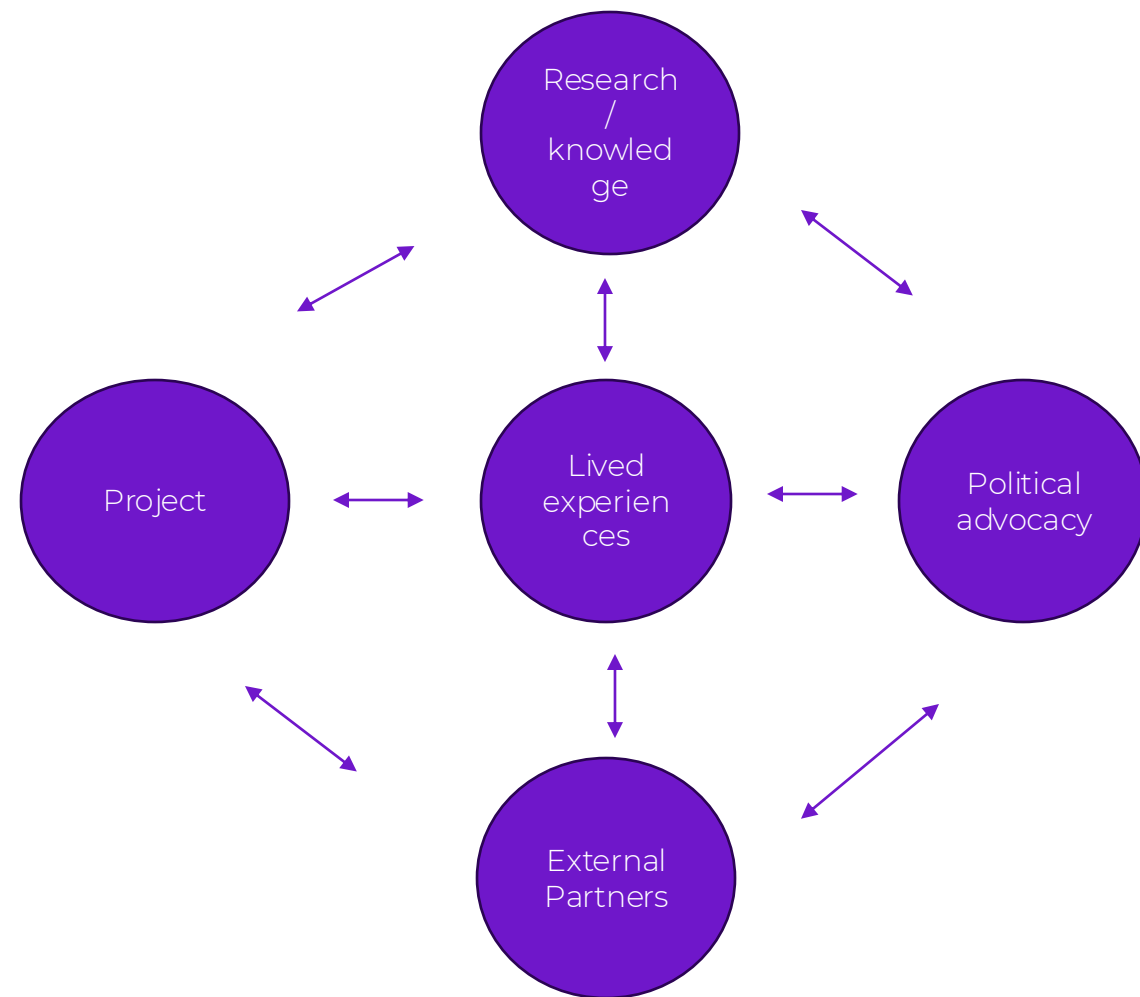
LEAD

Lobbying

Recommendations,
Opinion pieces,
Working groups/task forces,
Spokesperson meetings,
Ministerial meetings

Political agreements with youth
and UD influence

Structural and societal changes



»Vi kan godt lade som om, der er frit uddannelsesvalg. Men det er der ikke«

Som ekkværestolsbruger fylder den fysiske tilgængelighed meget for kandidat i pædagogisk sociologi Antoinette Veibel Pharao.

CASE | Johanne Hauch Jensen

Antoinette Veibel Pharao blev kandidat i pædagogisk sociologi i 2019 - og så har hun musikerevid og er ekkværestolsbruger. For hende har det på mange måder været en kamp med systemet, at få lov til at tage en uddannelse. Hun startede på pædagogseminaret, hvor hun måtte fravælge sin foretrukne, da den ikke var fysisk tilgængelig for hende i kørestol. Efter første praktik droppede hun ud, da en studiervejleder sagde, at hun aldrig ville kunne blive som pædagog. Hun kunne kun blive det, så det gik, hendes handicap.



»Jeg tænkte, at jeg ikke skal være et sted, hvor jeg ikke kan blive en rigtig pædagog. Så jeg stoppede og søgte ind på AU på uddannelsesvidenskab,« fortæller hun og fortsætter: »Vi kan godt lade som om, der er frit uddannelsesvalg. Men det er der ikke. Der er sindsvagt mange bygnings- der ikke er tilgængelige.« Hun kæmper flere der er droppet ud af uddannelsen bare på grund af den manglende fysiske tilgængelighed - og hendes egne valg af studie blev også dikteret ud fra, hvor hun kunne komme ind helt fysisk.

Så Antoinette Veibel Pharao endte med at holde sig rigtig meget på første del af studiet. »Jeg vidste, at jeg ville fortsætte med at studere efter min bachelor, så jeg blev ved med at kæmpe for det handicappede.« Hun undersøgte, hvilke bygninger hun skulle være i på kandidatuddannelsen og fandt ud af, at der heller ikke var et handicapretter der, som hun kunne bruge. Derfor tog hun fat i den sekskønnede afdeling.

»Da jeg mødte med dem, kunne de godt forstå, at det var problematisk med det eksisterende toilet, og derfor spurgte de, hvad jeg havde brug for. Jeg tog fat i min veninde, der også har muskelsvind, men med et andet behov, og vi holdt møde med dem, hvor de lyttede. Jeg har aldrig været så lykkelig i mit liv, som da de viste os det færdige toilet.«

For Antoinette Veibel Pharao har det også været en kamp med systemet, hvor der ikke var meget hjælp at hente. »Bort set med konsekvens af skole- eller dispensationer er enormt ubehagelige. Man sidder jo og skal pyntede sig selv hele tiden. Og det tænder så også på psykisk, hvor man næsten kan komme til at sidde og bebrejde sig selv. På grund af systemet ender jeg med at tage min bachelor på momentet tid selvom, jeg blev mere tog af det.«

Antoinette Veibel Pharao er i Horsens, Danmark. 10. marts · 🌐

Jeg har i dag været så heldig, at tale om menneskerettigheder og handicap på @sumh.dk Vi blev inviteret til at formidle, hvad menneskerettigheder personligt med et handicap overfor undervisere på landets Unesco skoler og uddannelsesi Det var en magisk oplevelse og jeg har håb for en bedre og mere ligeværdig fre børn og unge. Når undervisere tager det alvorligt og tager opgaven på sig om samfund for alle ❤️

Der var udover mig også oplæg fra seje @manillasen og hendes flugt fra Afgan møde med Danmark på godt og ondt og hendes arbejde i @rapolitics .

Og seje Asta, som fortalte om sit liv i Grønland og Danmark og om de fordomm problematikker der følger med.

Jeg føler mig opløftet, privilegeret og fyldt med energi! Sammen er vi stærkest og være ændre verden 🍀🍀🍀🍀



Katrine Rav har to diagnoser og er næsten ingeniør. Men nu må hun måske droppe ud

27-årige Katrine Rav mangler kun at skrive sit eksamen for at blive ingeniør. Men på grund af sit handicap - Det bør ikke være en kamp om lov at uddanne sig



Astrid kan hverken tale eller gå: Mit fysiske handicap er ikke længere mit største handicap

Astrid Siemens Lorenzen på 22 år har cerebral parese, spastisk lammelse. Hun kan hverken tale, gå eller frivilligt bevæge sine lemmer. Men det er ikke længere hendes største handicap.

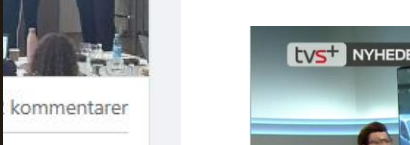
Astrid Siemens Lorenzen. Bestyrelsesmedlem i SUMH, Sammenslutningen af Unga Med Handicap



CORONAVIRUS

På sit andet levedøgn stoppede hun med at trække vejret – nu er vaccinen hendes største håb

20. feb. 2021, 05:16





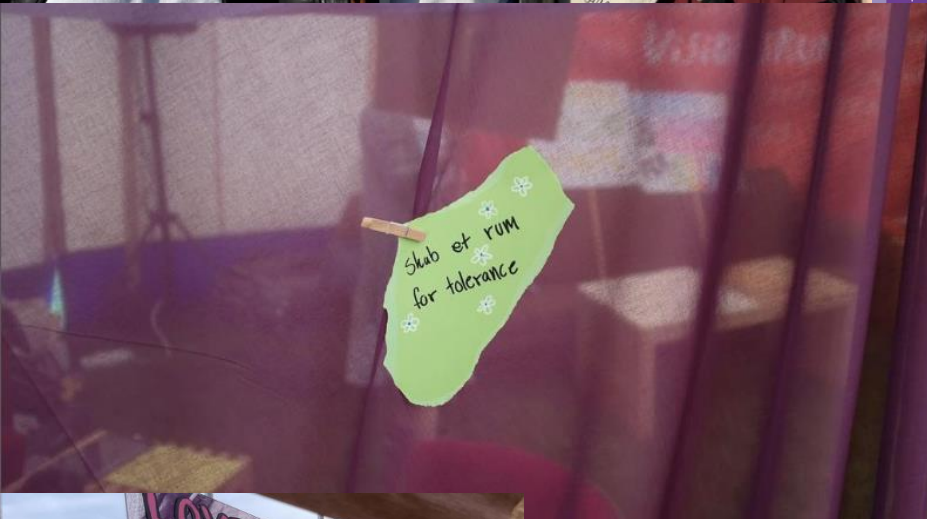
SUMH på Folkemødet 2022

Kom og deltag i SUMHs arrangementer til Folkemødet 2022!

Den 16.-19. juni er der Folkemøde på Bornholm, hvor SUMH deltager og har en række arrangementer, som vi håber, I vil deltage i, hvis I er derovre.

Vi har følgende arrangementer i år:

- **Torsdag d. 16. juni kl. 14.00-15.00 i Kæmpestrandens debattelt** vil vi sammen med Børns Vilkår, Sind Ungdom og Autisme Ungdom invitere indenfor til en debat om de udfordringer alt for mange unge med handicap oplever ved at gennemføre en ungdomsuddannelse
- **Torsdag d. 16. juni kl. 17.45-18.45 i Rageriet** vil vi sammen med Videnscenter om Handicap sætte spot på de 45.000 unge, der står uden job uddannelse. Vi giver mikrofonen til unge og sætter fagfolk og politikere skolebænken for på den måde at gå på løsninger
- **Torsdag d. 18. juni kl. 11.00-13.00 på 0 Den Sociale Scene** vil unge og ledere fra hhv. SUMH og Foreningerne sætte fokus på kunst og kultur som ledelsesværktøj i et samarbejde med 'TOLERANCE' som hovedfokus



Inclusion is Innovation

Diversity Drives Development and Change
Inclusion is not only about fairness – it is about progress.

- Inclusion is not merely an equality issue; it unlocks potential.
- Diversity creates new perspectives and therefore new solutions.
- Inclusion is an engine for innovation – and history has repeatedly proven this.

Innovations that started with accessibility needs

- **Subtitles and captions** – originally developed for people with hearing impairments; now used by everyone, especially on social media.
- **Electric toothbrushes** – originally developed for people with reduced motor function.
- **Escalators and automatic doors** – designed with mobility challenges in mind and now part of everyday life for everyone.

Accessibility creates innovations that benefit society as a whole.

Policies that Enable Inclusion

Inclusion Requires Political Action

Education Policy

- Differentiated teaching methods and access to special educational support create multiple pathways to learning.

Employment Policy

- Flexible employment schemes and inclusive labour market initiatives strengthen participation.

Technology Policy

- Public investment in Universal Design promotes innovation and accessibility.

Representation

- Political initiatives that involve young people, persons with disabilities, and minorities create more relevant and effective solutions.

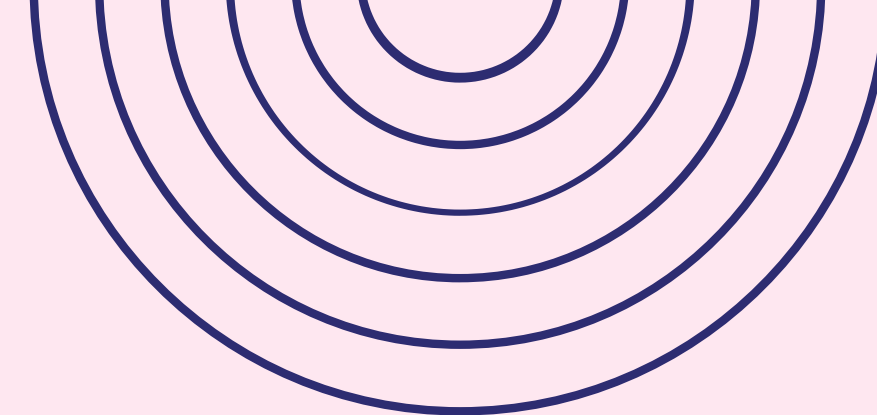
**Inclusion is Innovation /
Innovation is Inclusion**

SUMH

ungdomsliv – med handicap

**Thank
you**

Independent living and community-based supported living: Comments and Responses from Disability Organisations. Linking lived experience to systemic policy solutions

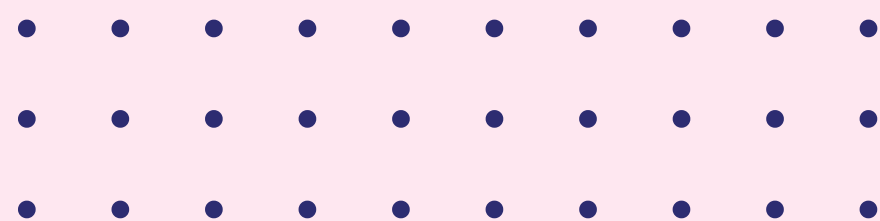


Indrė Širvinskaitė

President of Lithuanian Disability Forum
Disability Rights and Inclusive Education Expert



Lithuania



Independent Living & Community-Based Supported Living

Comments and Responses
from Disability Organisations

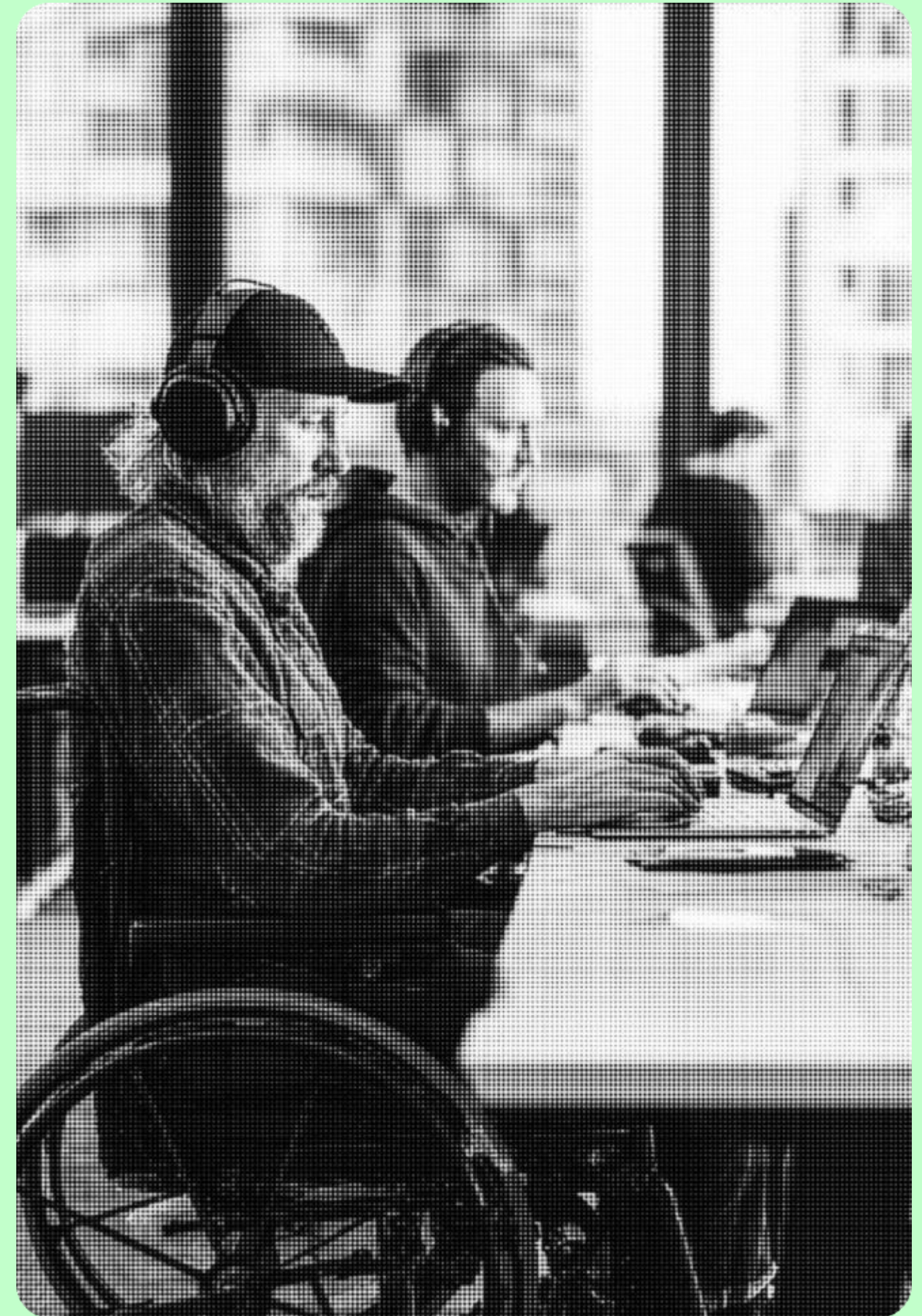
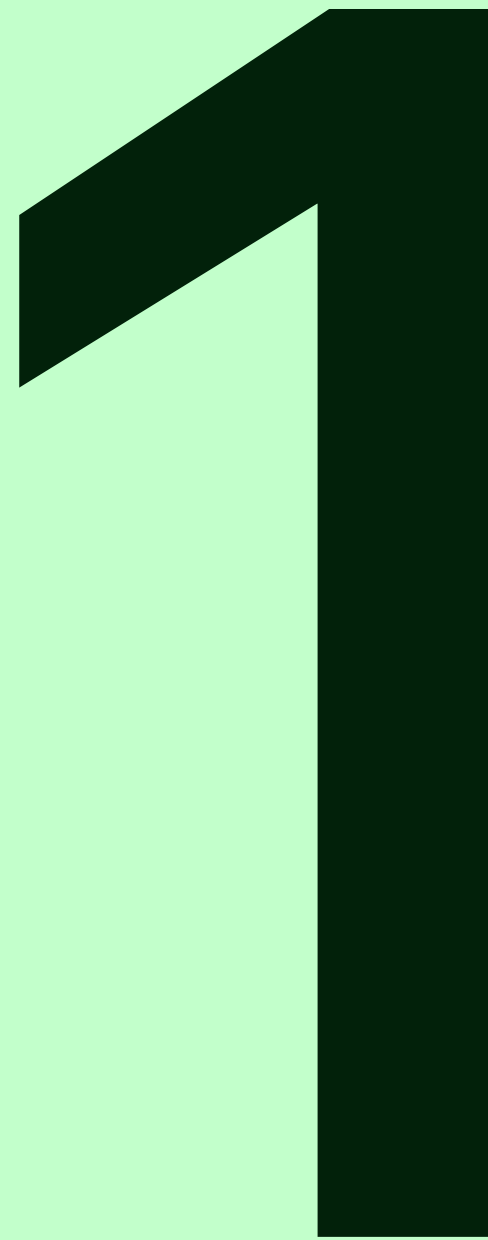
content

1 UN CRPD. Independent living.

2 Deinstitutionalisation. Lithuania. Persons with intensive support needs.

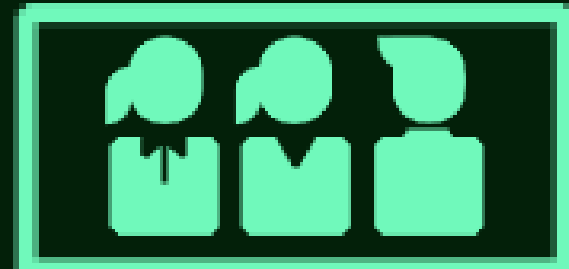
3 Looking for solutions.

UN CRPD Independent living



Deinstitutionalization is not just changing the names of buildings or services. It is the human right to have a home.

Traditional services vs. True independence



What We Don't Want:

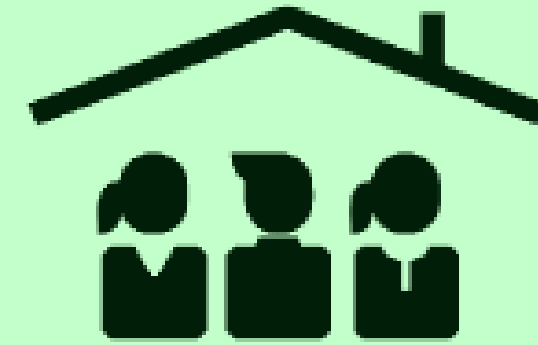
Isolation & exclusion

Strict routines devoid of personal will

Paternalistic service delivery

Identical activities for grouped individuals

Forced sharing of assistants



What True Independence is:

Choosing where and with whom to live

Deciding what to eat and when to sleep

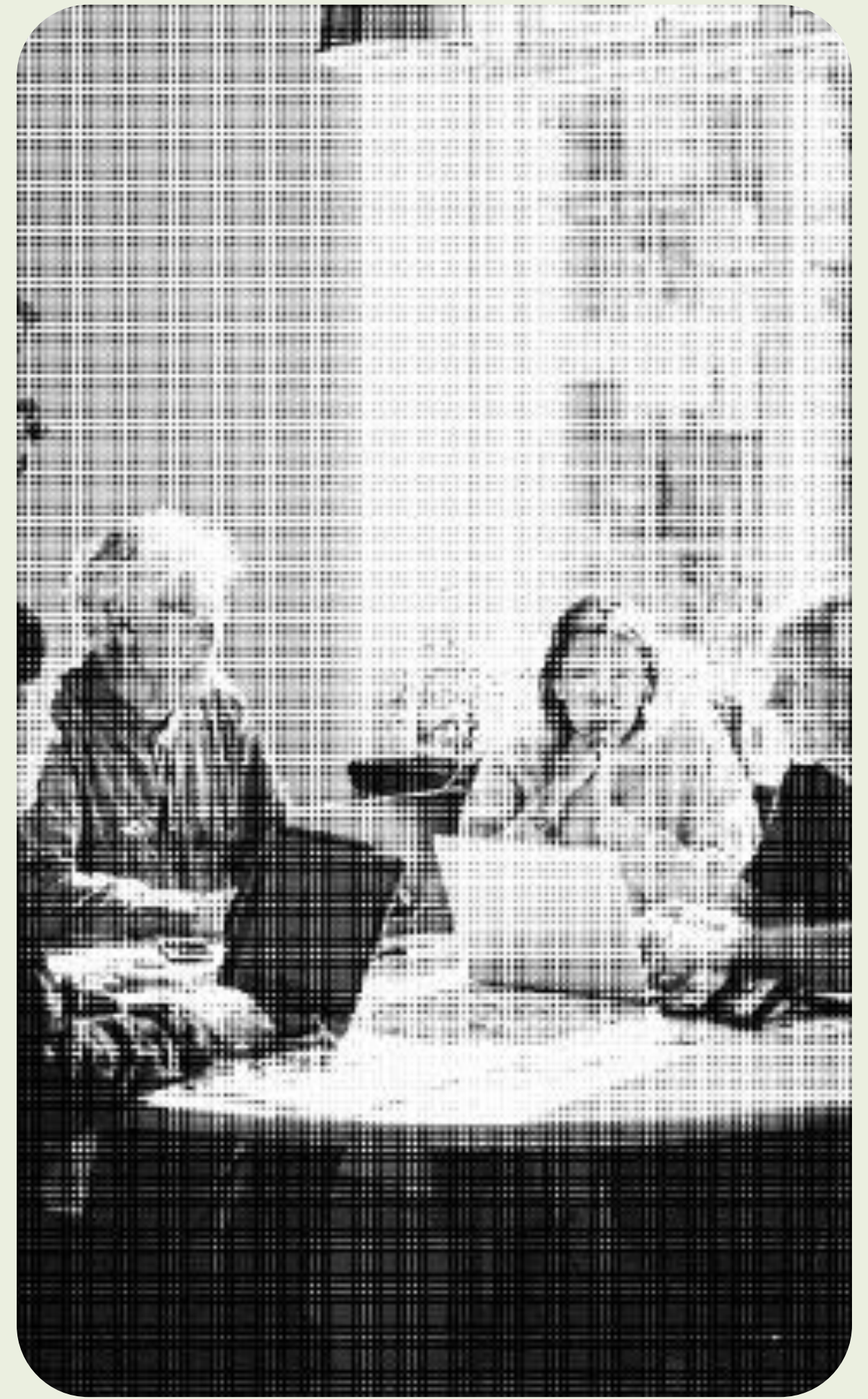
Placing a tablecloth and candles at the table

Having pets

Listening to music

Deinstitutionali sation in Lithuania

2



Deinstitutionalisation in Lithuania

Since 2014, Lithuania has been implementing a deinstitutionalisation reform aimed at replacing large residential institutions with community-based services for persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities.

From 2030, placement of children and adults with disabilities into large institutional care settings will no longer be allowed, creating an urgent need for sustainable community alternatives.

Persons with intensive support needs



Economic and social isolation

Parents are forced out of labour market.

30% of mothers leave after the birth, and another 30% leave work when the child turns 18.



Deep poverty

The monetary value of informal support ranges from €1,548 to €3,256.

The at-risk-of-poverty rate among persons with disabilities in 2025 increased by 5.3 %, reaching 43.5%.
Intense support needs – 48 %.



Physical and mental exhaustion

15% of individuals experience severe stress.

For 47%, fatigue is classified as moderate to severe.



Unequal Funding Practices

Services for persons with intensive support needs are **funded by the State.**

Municipalities interpret co-financing responsibilities differently.

As a result:

families are forced to carry significant financial burdens, **the 80% income protection principle is undermined,** and persons with intensive support needs face discrimination.

Lack of Systemic Solutions

Lithuania still lacks sufficient alternatives to:

- family-based care,
- and institutional care.

Municipalities are not legally required to systematically plan or fund independent living pathways for persons with intensive support needs.

Looking for solutions

3



In 2026, LDF and Social ministry launched a nationwide monitoring / reassessing process

Regions

10

Municipalities

60

**Face-to-face meetings
in 2026**

10

- Progress of deinstitutionalisation
- Availability and accessibility of community-based services
- Municipal preparedness for 2030
- Future service development plans

Positive findings



- Expansion of group living homes and supported housing
- Stronger focus on community-based support
- Increased dialogue between municipalities and disability organisations
- Political leadership
- Good practices to learn from (pilot shared-living homes model)

Remaining challenges

Community services are still largely designed for people with lower support needs.

There is still a major lack of:

- 24/7 intensive support services
- Housing solutions for persons with intensive support needs
- Structured transition planning from childhood to adulthood
- Sustainable support systems for families

It is time to move from discussing independent living **forms** to realizing independent living **culture**.

We need:

**adequate funding, workforce
development, cooperation between
municipalities and ministry, and long-term
political commitment.**

Independent living must become a guaranteed right — not a burden carried by families or NGOs alone.



Thank
you!

Cross-sector cooperation, highlighting practices where education, employment services, municipalities and NGOs work together. Integrated service models, case management and coordination, the role of municipalities

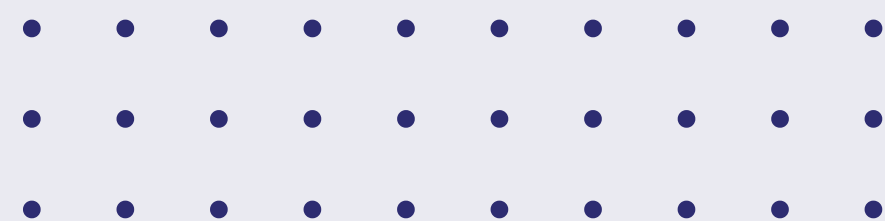
Laura Mikelevičiūtė

Adviser

Agency for Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Ministry of Social Affairs of Lithuania

Lithuania



**Cross-sector cooperation:
collaboration between education,
employment services,
municipalities, and NGOs**



**ASMENS SU NEGALIA TEISIŲ
APSAUGOS AGENTŪRA**
PRIE LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS SOCIALINĖS
APSAUGOS IR DARBO MINISTERIJOS

Laura Mikelevičiūtė,

Agency for Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under
the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania

Coordination of assistance (Assistance plan)

Service operating since 2024

Coordination of assistance is a process that includes:

- providing a person with a disability or their representative with relevant information,
- appointing an assistance manager,
- developing an assistance plan,
- monitoring the implementation of the plan.



Coordination of assistance (Assistance plan)

Who gets notified and contacts
the person with disability?

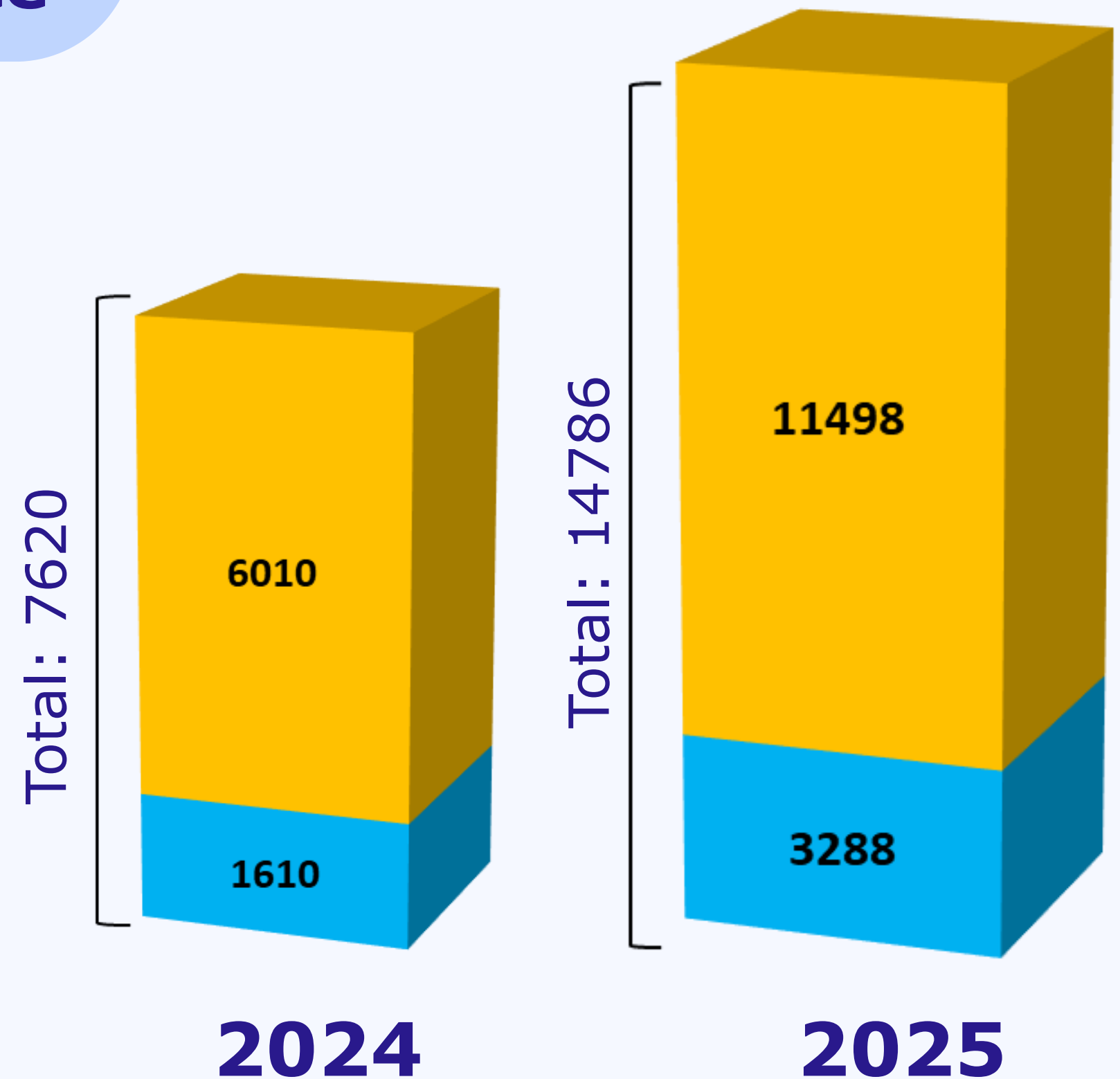
- Municipalities
- Technical aid center
- Employment Service
- Lithuanian sign language translation center
- The Lithuanian Union of the Blind and Visually Impaired



Number of decisions to identify the need for coordination of assistance

2024 – 7620 cases
(6010 adults, 1610 children)

2025 – 14786 cases
(11498 adults, 3288 children)

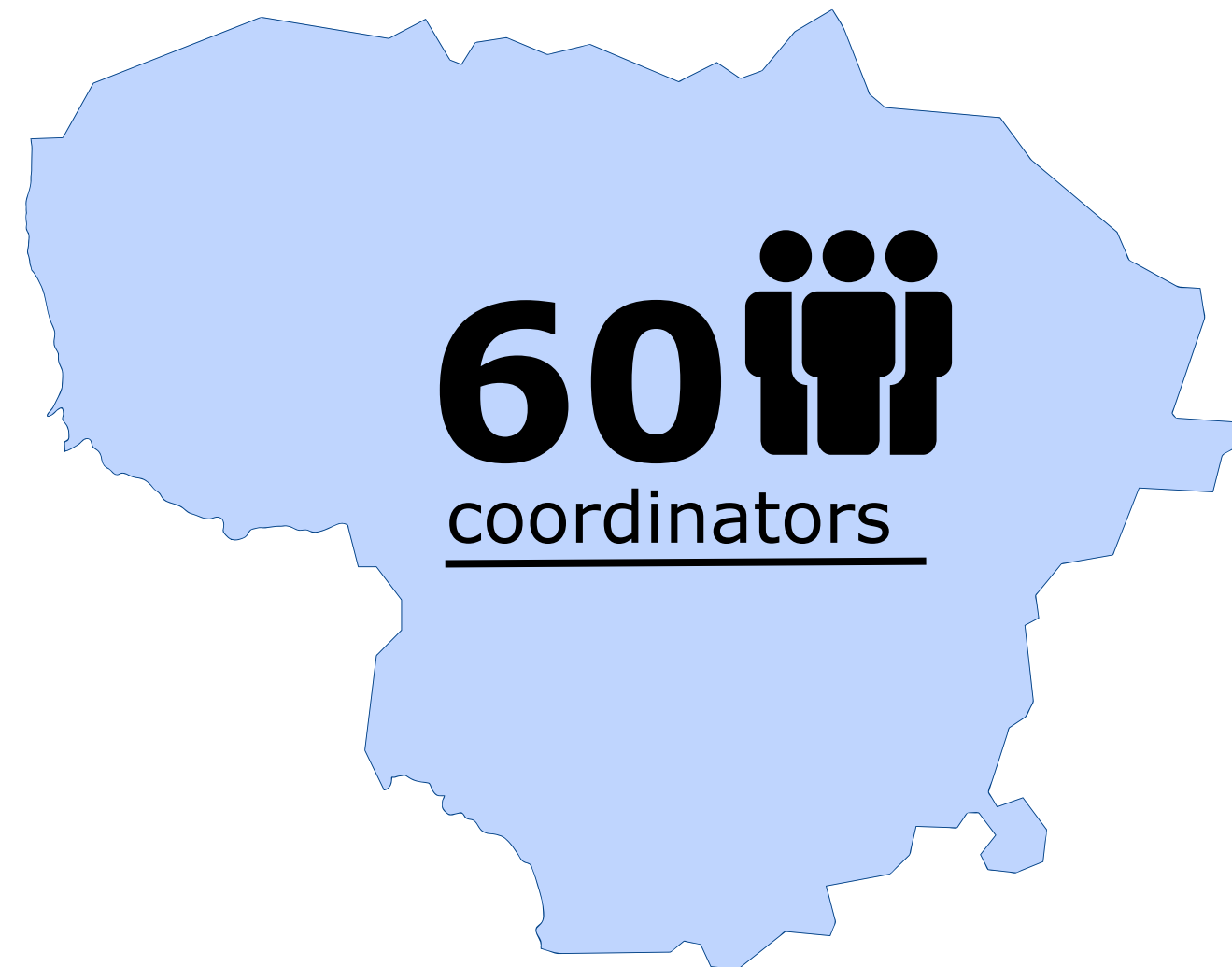


Coordination of disability affairs

- coordinate the CRPD and other reglamentation implementation within the municipality's territory
- strengthen cooperation between state and municipal institutions, NGO's etc.
- continually seek ways to understand the needs of people with disabilities and ensure that those needs are met



Coordination of disability affairs



Coordination service
in every municipality
of Lithuania

Allocating funds for NGO's projects in education, employment etc.

- Activities aimed at strengthening the capabilities of people with disabilities, increasing their independence, motivation, and engagement in employment activities
 - Expected outcome for 2026:
13 activities involving 40 participants,
35 of whom have disabilities.
-



Collaboration with NGO's campaign „DUOday“

Promoting DUOday initiative
(implemented by NGO „SOPA“):


Job-shadowing initiative in which companies
and organizations open their doors to people
with disabilities, inviting them to try out new
professions and job roles.



Campaing „Jokio skirtumo“ (engl. – There is no difference“

- Running since 2021
- Focuses on social inclusion, including inclusion in the open labour market

The goal is to change attitudes — specifically, the views of employers, public and private service providers, and other members of society toward people with disabilities

 Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus
November 20 at 10:01 AM · 🌐

Malonu dalintis geromis žiniomis! ⭐

Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus jungiasi prie [Asmens su negalia teisių apsaugos agentūros](#) iniciatyvos „[Jokio skirtumo](#), su ar be negalios. Durys atviros visiems“.

💛 Mums svarbu, kad muziejus būtų vieta, kur kiekvienas jaučiasi matomas, priimtas ir laukiantis. Tai reiškia ne tik žodžius, bet ir kasdienes sprendimus – nuo pritaikytų erdvių ir paslaugų iki atviros darbo kultūros.

Muziejuje dirba žmonės su skirtingomis patirtimis ir poreikiais – kiekvienas jų yra svarbi mūsų bendruomenės dalis. Esame nuolat besimokanti institucija – dalyvaujame mokymuose, dirbame su įvairiomis bendruomenėmis ir ieškome būdų, kaip būti dar atviresniems.

💡 Kviečiame ir kitas organizacijas jungtis prie šios iniciatyvos ir kurti darbo aplinkas, kuriose kiekvienas gali jaustis svarbus ir priimtas.

[#jokioskirtumo](#) [#itrauktis](#) [#socialinėatsakomybė](#) [#darborinka](#) [#lietuvosnacionalinismuziejus](#)



Deinstitutionalization project: case management

- Services for people with intellect and (or) psychosocial disability
- Case management services received from 2024 (spring) – 1660 adults
- Case managers employed by municipalities



More information: pervarka.it

Deinstitutionalization project: social workshops

- Services for people with intellect and (or) psychosocial disability
 - Helping to achieve work related skills, creating work places in rural areas
 - 58 socials workshops in all Lithuanian regions, participant number from 2024 (spring)
 - 1036 adults
-



More information: pervarka.lt

Education & Employment

- Vocational rehabilitation is designed to help people with disabilities regain their work skills (collaboration with Lithuanian employment service)
- Community-based social rehabilitation services for people with disabilities
In 2025, service received by 10 481.
(NGO's, social service centers, day activity centers in every municipality)



Collaboration with Lithuanian employment services

Map of social services: relevant in education and employment

Rezultatai (54)

mokymai Savivaldybė

Paslaugos Daugiau filtrų Išvalyti filtrus

VšĮ Ukmergės šeimos centras
VšĮ Ukmergės šeimos centras – tai centras jaunoms, besilaukiančioms ir vaikus iki 6 metų auginančioms šeimoms, mamai ir tėčiui, visai Jūsų šeimai.

Vienuolyno g. 17, Ukmergė +370 655 55309

Klaipėdos miesto šeimos ir vaiko gerovės centras
Socialines paslaugas Klaipėdos miesto gyventojams teikianti įstaiga.

Debreceno g. 48, Klaipėda +370 640 48864

Thank you for your attention!

Laura Mikelevičiūtė

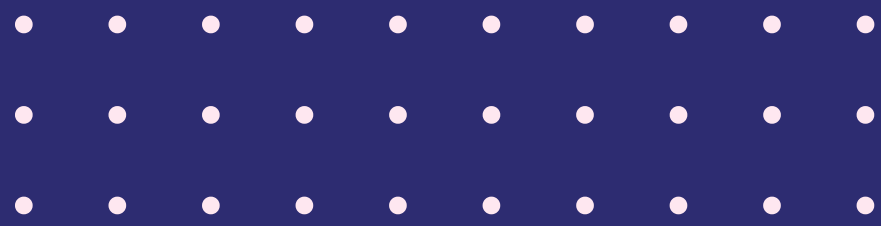
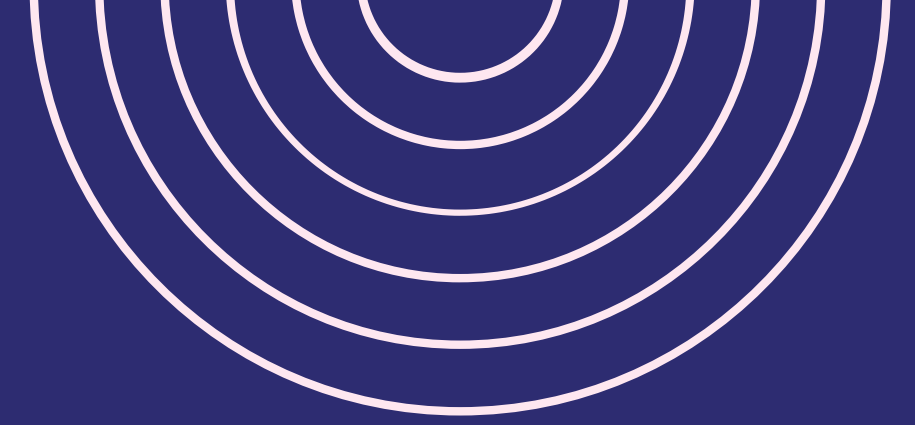
Agency for Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under
the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania

laura.mikeleviciute@anta.lt



**ASMENS SU NEGALIA TEISIŲ
APSAUGOS AGENTŪRA**
PRIE LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS SOCIALINĖS
APSAUGOS IR DARBO MINISTERIJOS

Break



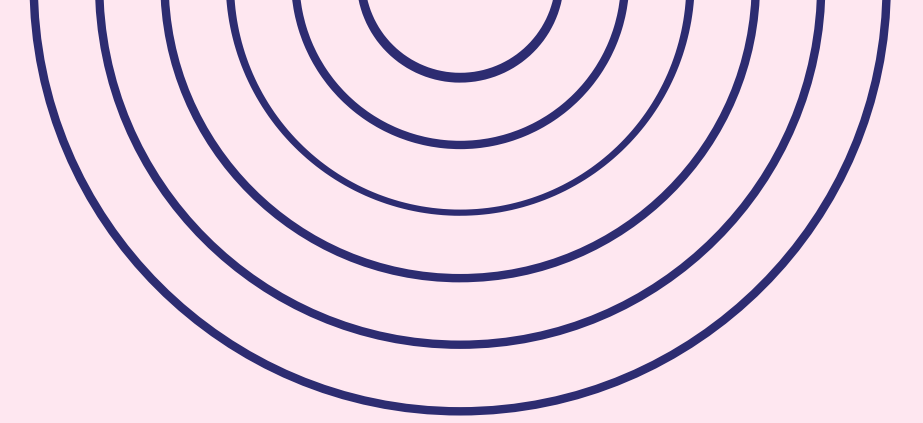
Cross-sector Cooperation - Examples of effective intersectoral collaboration, data sharing and division of responsibilities

Daiga Veinberga

Policy Officer in Accessibility of Environment
and Services and Project Manager
Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability
Organisations SUSTENTO

Latvia

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No single service can do it alone: cross-sector cooperation for inclusive transitions

Latvian experience from SUSTENTO

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Project director

**The Latvian Umbrella Body of
Disability
Organisations SUSTENTO**



SUSTENTO

Our mission:

We work to influence government policy so that people with disabilities and people with chronic illnesses can:

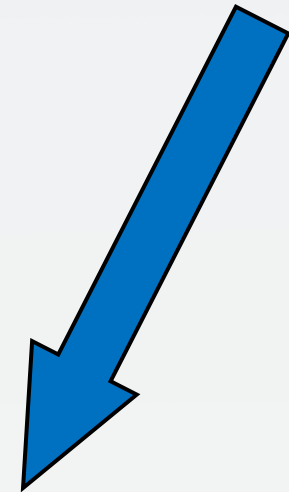
1. Enjoy their human rights
2. Live free from discrimination

**The Latvian Umbrella Body For Disability
Organisations SUSTENTO
was founded 2002**

At present, SUSTENTO unites 53 organisations whose members are people with different types of disabilities and chronic illnesses.

The capacity of SUSTENTO

National organisations with regional network



Direct communication
with target groups



Direct communication
with regional institutions

Situation in
Latvia for
young people
aged 16 - 30



Statistics

There are approximately 12,000–13,000 people in this target group in Latvia.

- 16–17 years old: There are approximately 2,500–3,000 children with disabilities in Latvia (the total number of children with disabilities reached 10,005 at the beginning of 2025, of which the older groups are the largest).
- 18–29 years old: There are approximately 8,500–9,500 people in this group. In total, 208,240 young people (18–29 years old) lived in Latvia at the beginning of 2025, and the prevalence of disability in this group is around 4–5%.

Risks

The biggest challenge in service continuity is when a young person reaches adulthood.

- Change of status: Disability is no longer defined as "child with disability" but is assigned a disability group I, II or III.
- Legal representation

The "**transition gap**" affects approximately 800-1000 young people each year who reach the age of 18 and "transition" from child disability status to the adult system. This is the point where cross-sectoral cooperation most often fails.

Not in employment, not in education risk: Young people with disabilities aged 16-30 are one of the largest groups that end up in this status.

Financial burden: Minimum income thresholds have been increased.

Available support measures

Support from the State Agency for Economic and Social Affairs and European funds (2021–2027 planning period): Current programs incorporate specific cross-sectoral support measures:

- Subsidized jobs specifically for unemployed young people with disabilities.
- SIVA (State Agency for Social Integration) College and Jūrmala Vocational Secondary School programs (computer systems, catering, business), which provide professional rehabilitation.
- Support from mentors and psychologists to help young people transition from the education system to the active labor market.

Cooperation gaps

1. The "18-year threshold" as a critical turning point in the system
2. Fragmented inter-sectoral (Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health) cooperation
3. Lack of day care centres and regional inequality
4. Lack of case management
5. Shifting focus from benefits to services

SUSTENTO experience



Why is cross-sectoral cooperation important?

A young person with a disability may need support in many areas at the same time:

- accessible education;
- career guidance;
- social support;
- personal assistance;
- accessible transportation;
- reasonable accommodations;
- family or peer support;
- inclusive employers;
- clear and accessible information

Example 1: Youth participation and empowerment

KEEP Driven - Erasmus+ project

This is an Erasmus+ project targeting young people with disabilities. The project supports young people to understand their rights, strengthen their confidence and participate more actively in democratic and civic life.

In this example, data sharing is not just an exchange of technical data. It is also a structured collection of lived experiences.

Information flows in several directions:

- 1.** Young people identify barriers and needs.
- 2.** NGOs help structure this information into training, research and advocacy messages.
- 3.** Partners compare experiences across countries
- 4.** Findings are shared with decision-makers and service providers
- 5.** Young people's feedback is used to improve future support

Example 2: Inclusive employment pathways

SUSTENTO practically supports young people with disabilities on their path to the labor market.

- SUSTENTO implemented a mentoring program, where the mentor helped the young person find a job and enter the labor market;
- Is currently launching a new program cycle to support young people in the field of employment;
- Advises employers and institutions on adapted work environments; helps explain reasonable adjustments in the workplace;
- Has trained employees of the State Employment Agency;

- Has trained employers on the inclusion of people with disabilities in the work environment;
- Helps reduce stereotypes about the abilities of young people with disabilities in the labor market;
- Promotes cooperation between the young person, employer, employment services, municipalities and NGOs.

The goal is that the young person does not remain alone on the path from education to work.

Example 3: Accessibility as a collaboration model

SUSTENTO has developed accessibility guidelines for public events. These guidelines show that accessibility is not only a technical issue. It is a cooperation process.

Accessible events require cooperation between:

- municipalities;
- event organisers;
- cultural institutions;
- disability organisations;
- transport providers;
- security services;
- communication specialists;
- suppliers and technical teams;
- participants with disabilities.

Example 4: Inclusive civil protection

Inclusive civil protection shows why cross-sector cooperation is essential.

In emergency situations, lack of coordination can become exclusion. Persons with disabilities may need accessible warnings, support during evacuation, accessible shelters, medication, assistive devices, personal assistance or clear information in an understandable format.

This requires cooperation between:

- municipalities;
- civil protection authorities;
- social services;
- emergency services;
- disability organisations;
- community organisations;
- persons with disabilities and their families

Lessons learned from SUSTENTO practice

1. Cooperation must start early, before the person reaches a crisis point.
2. The person with a disability must be involved as an expert in their own life.
3. Accessible information is a condition for meaningful participation.
4. NGOs can act as bridges between people, services and decision-makers.
5. Clear roles reduce delays and misunderstandings.
6. Data sharing must be safe, but it must also be useful.
7. Accessibility and inclusion must be planned from the beginning, not added at the end.

Closing message

- Cross-sector cooperation is not only about bringing institutions to the same table.
- It is about making sure that the person does not have to carry the whole system on their shoulders.
- When education, employment services, municipalities and civil society work together, support becomes a pathway, not a labyrinth.

Inclusion becomes real when systems learn to work around the person, not around their own borders.

Thank you!

Panel discussion: Ideas for the future Nordic-Baltic cooperation on Disability Policy and Practice – presentations of good examples of cooperations



Moderator:
Meelis Joost
Chairperson of the
Board
Estonian Chamber of
People with Disabilities



Indrė Širvinskaitė
President of Lithuanian
Disability Forum



Kimmo Hurtig
Team Manager Valteri
National centre for
learning support



Leif Olsen
Senior Researcher VIVE
Danish Center for
Social Science
Research



Thank you all for participating!

12.00-13.00 lunch

13.00 safe travel home

