

The Right to Live Independently and Be Included: Strengthening local and national campaigns for community living

Workshop of the European Coalition for Community Living

11 September 2008, Oslo (Drammen), Norway (10:00–17:00)

At least 1.45 million disabled people across Europe still live in long-stay residential institutions, segregated and excluded from the rest of society. Many more lead impoverished lives through lack of opportunities and inadequate support for independent living.

The **European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL)** campaigns for community living for all disabled people and the closure of long-stay residential institutions. ECCL also promotes exchange of good practice and seeks to support organisations on the local and national level in efforts to bring about change in their countries. To this end, we are publishing an **Advocacy Manual** that will help readers and their organisations develop effective strategies to influence policies and practice in their countries - strategies that will help us move away from segregation and exclusion to rights, choice, control and participation in society.

Before producing the final version of the manual, we are organising a one-day workshop on 11 September 2008 in Oslo, Norway. The workshop is aimed at representatives of disability organisations and service providers working on the local or national level, with or without previous experience in advocacy work.

Advocacy is an organised course of action to achieve change. (Source: Amnesty International)

Independent living is a basic human right and it means disabled people having the same choice, control and freedom as any citizen at home, at work and as members of the community. Independent living also means that an individual with disabilities is limited only in the ways non-disabled people are limited. (Source: Independent Living Institute)

Objectives of the workshop:

- ◆ To help participants understand community living as a policy objective and explore the processes through which policies can be influenced;
- ◆ To help participants plan how they and their organisations can strengthen their advocacy strategies for community living;
- ◆ To explore ways of sharing ideas and experiences after the workshop.

Questions for the workshop:

- ◇ What are we learning from our experiences of campaigning for community living across Europe? What is working? What is not?
- ◇ How do we formulate a clear message about community living as a policy objective?
- ◇ What are the elements in effective campaigning strategies?
- ◇ How can we develop our own local and national advocacy strategies?
- ◇ How can we build on the experience from this workshop?

The workshop is open to a maximum of 20 participants and will be facilitated by **Gengoux Gomez** (Self-Advocacy Coordinator, Inclusion Europe, Belgium), **Kapka Panayotova** (Center for Independent Living, Bulgaria), **David Towell** (Center for Inclusive Futures, UK) and **Agnes Kozma** (Tizard Centre, University of Kent, UK/Hungary). The workshop will be highly interactive. Participants will be invited to share their experiences and explore the use of concepts and tools presented in the manual. Case studies from around Europe will be used to illustrate different stages of planning and implementing an advocacy campaign, and to help participants develop their own action plans.

All workshop participants will receive a draft copy of the manual, which will be officially launched at ECCL's Annual Seminar, on 12 - 13 September. After the Seminar, space will be created on ECCL website www.community-living.info for exchanging experiences on progress in advocacy campaigns and ways of using the manual.

To apply for the workshop, please write to Ines Bulic, coordinator@community-living.info. Participation in the workshop is free of charge. ECCL is not able to support participants' travel and accommodation costs. In case of more than 20 applications, ECCL will be looking at participants' gender, nationality and the type of organisation they are coming from, to ensure a good balance. The deadline for registration is **1 August 2008**.