

INSTITUTION OR COMMUNITY?

Keystone Human Services International Moldova Association (Keystone Moldova) was founded in 2004 by Keystone Human Services International, headquartered in the USA. Keystone Moldova is a non-governmental organization, which focuses on developing a supportive environment for vulnerable people to enhance their skills and value them as equal members of society. Since 2008, Keystone Moldova, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF), has been implementing the “Community for All - Moldova” (C4A-MD) Program with the financial support of the Open Society Foundations/Mental Health Initiative and the Soros Foundation - Moldova. This Program aims to support the reform of social protection of persons with disabilities through the development of new community social services for people with intellectual/mental disabilities, providing technical assistance to the MLSPF in developing the legal framework for these services.

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“People with disabilities – actors in preventing and fighting discrimination” is a project implemented by Keystone Moldova with the financial support of the Soros Foundation - Moldova. The Project runs from 1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014 and aims to ensure the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in the prevention and fight against discrimination on disability grounds. In order to achieve the intended purpose of this project, the „ Group of people with intellectual disabilities who have been deprived of the right to live in the community” has been formed and empowered to recognize discriminatory situations on disability grounds and exercise the rights set in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a result, the “People with disabilities – actors in preventing and combating discrimination” project implementation:

- 15 persons with intellectual disabilities were informed about their rights and were encouraged to actively promote non-discrimination on disability grounds;
- 15 specialists were trained in „ easy to read” communication language and appropriate ways to support people with disabilities in decision making;
- 15 specialists who provide support to people with disabilities were trained in methods and techniques of providing assistance to the beneficiaries in self-determination;
- More promotional materials on the rights of people with disabilities to live in the community were developed;
- Increased confidence of people with disabilities that they can take an active role in promoting, monitoring and influencing policies that will encourage non-discrimination and equal opportunities.

In the Institution you have no right to make simple decisions about the things that are important to you. You just have to fulfil the orders and instructions of the staff.

In the community everyone is the master of his own life.





„Persons with disabilities should have the opportunity to be actively involved in decision-making processes about policies and programmes, including those directly concerning them”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Preamble (o)

In the Institution I was afraid to say what I think.

**In the community I can talk frankly about the things
that are important to me.**



„States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice“.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 21

**In the Institution if I had a headache I was told
to endure it until it passed.**

In the community I get medical help whenever I need it.



„States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent discriminatory denial of health care or health services or food and fluids on the basis of disability”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 25 (f)

In the Institution the laws do not protect you because you do not have the same rights like other people; no one hears what you say.

In the community I have equal rights and responsibilities like other people and my dignity is respected.



„States Parties shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds“.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 5 (2)

**In the Institution I could not choose for whom to vote.
I was told who to vote for.**

**In the community the choice is mine.
My vote counts and is secret.**



„States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected in public functions”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 29 (a)

In the Institution I had to fight for food or do various services for the workers there to get a bit extra.

In the community no one steals my food. I choose by myself when to have meal, and what and how much to eat.



„States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions, and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 28 (1)

In the Institution my work was not paid and if I refused to work I was beaten.

**In the community my work is respected and I'm paid
for the work I do.**



„States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not held in slavery or in servitude, and are protected, on an equal basis with others, from forced or compulsory labour”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27, (2)

In the Institution I was sometimes beaten and mocked even though I had done nothing wrong and fear followed me everywhere. I had nowhere to complain.

In the community I'm treated with respect and dignity.



„States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, educational and other measures to protect persons with disabilities, both within and outside the home, from all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse, including their gender-based aspects”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 16 (1)

**In the Institution my personal belongings became
everyone's belongings.**

In the community my things are my property.



„States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions, and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 28, (1)

**In the Institution every initiative was punished,
because it was considered a form of protest.**

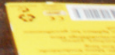
In the community my proposals are considered.

Describe mine



He. He. He

MARIN



„States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 21

In the Institution there is no privacy. I lived with 10-15 other people in the room; I was always supervised. I was not offered the chance of meeting my life partner.

In the community I share my home with others with whom I get along well and I can visit my friends and family anytime I want. And when I'm ready, I have the freedom to find my life partner. Now I'm learning what family life is.




„Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 19, (a)

In the Institution my life ran in the limits of some hundreds of square meters. I was not allowed to go outside of the Institution gate and if I dared to do it I was punished.

**In the community I'm free to go where I want.
I visit new and exciting places.**






„States Parties shall recognize the rights of persons with disabilities to liberty of movement, to freedom to choose their residence and to a nationality, on an equal basis with others”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 18, (1)

In the Institution all the days were the same, and I could only hear about life beyond the fences. Nobody was concerned to teach us about how to live when we leave the Institution.

**In the community I learned to live independently,
to make decisions and to solve problems.**





„Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 19, (b)

In some Institutions you are not given the chance to learn to read and to write.

In the community, I get help to learn things I have not learned before - to read, to write, to count....




„States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24, (3)

In the Institution we could not choose how to look. We got clothing at random; we all got the same haircut at the same time, without someone asking us whether we wanted it or not.

**Since I'm in the community I dress as I like.
I decide if I want my hair cut or not.**






„...Recognizing the importance for persons with disabilities of their individual autonomy and independence, including the freedom to make their own choices”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Preamble (n)

In Institution we could not enjoy the spontaneity of life, we lived according to a schedule established by others and the only friends you could have were those we had nearby.

I enjoy life in the community and communication with my friends and family. Together we have fun, and we enjoy the cinema, theatre, concerts and travelling.





„States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 30, point 1 (c)

In the Institution I had to wait for the end of the month in order to celebrate my birthday. All the birthdays of those born during the same month were celebrated together at the end of the month.

Now that I live in the community, I celebrate my actual birthday. I prepare a meal, put on beautiful clothes and wait for the guests I've invited! I like to receive presents!



„...Recognizing that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Preamble (e)

In the Institution nobody was concerned that I could not hear well and that I needed to wear a hearing device. If I had worn a hearing aid since I was a child, I would be able to speak more clearly than I do now.

Ever since I have lived in the community, I wear a hearing device. Now my words sound better and it is easier for me to have discussions with anybody.



„...Ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 9, point 2 (b)

In the Institution I couldn't watch the shows I was interested in; I had to accept what others liked to watch.

At home I watch what I like and in this way I find out more interesting things.



„...Promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 9, point 2 (g)

**In the Institution, I was seldom called by my name,
and I had almost forgotten how it sounds.**

At home everyone calls my name and that fact makes me feel loved.



„Every person with disabilities has a right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity on an equal basis with others“.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 17

**You cannot leave the Institution whenever you choose;
you may leave only with somebody's permission. If you left,
it was considered an escape.**

**In the community you can go wherever you like
and whenever you need to go.**






„...Are not deprived of their liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily, and that any deprivation of liberty is in conformity with the law, and that the existence of a disability shall in no case justify a deprivation of liberty”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 14, point 1 (b)

For different holidays in the Institution, festivities were organized. We learned poems about childhood, mother, winter, Santa Claus, and we sang children's songs, although we were already far from being children. I wish we didn't sing songs and recite poems. We were already grown-ups for such kind of activities.

Now I'm celebrating all the holidays like all the others of my age. When there is a holiday in the community, everyone shares in cleaning, prepares meals for guests, goes to church, visits other people or goes to the village center, where people meet and talk, watch football, and listen to music or dance.






„...The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24 (a)

In the Institution I felt like no one's son.

Now, I've got a family!





„...Convinced that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State, and that persons with disabilities and their family members should receive the necessary protection and assistance to enable families to contribute towards the full and equal enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Preamble (x)

**In the institution, I was given no chance to learn
a profession.**

Since I have lived in the community, I have learned how to make brooms and use the sewing machine, and that will allow me to earn my own money.





„...Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27 (d)

**In the Institution, if they saw a number of us together,
we were told to split up, or else we were suspected
of being “up to something”...**

Since I moved out into the community, I can speak to as many young people as I want. Moreover, I am a member of a self-advocacy group. We have monthly meetings in Chisinau. At these meetings, I've learned that people with disabilities can become part of different groups or organizations if they want.




„...Forming and joining organizations of persons with disabilities to represent persons with disabilities at international, national, regional and local levels”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 29 (b, ii)

When I lived in the Institution, I never thought I could ever have something that belonged to me personally.

Now, together with the other young men I live with, we have a small business. The money we get is not enough to cover all the expenses, but at least we can buy some provisions on it.





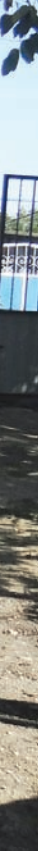
„...States Parties shall take all appropriate and effective measures to ensure the equal right of persons with disabilities to own or inherit property, to control their own financial affairs and to have equal access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, and shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not arbitrarily deprived of their property”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 12, (5)

**In the Institution we went to bed at 8 or 9 o'clock
in the evening although we were not children.**

Now, I decide when to go to sleep.






„...The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24, point 1 (a)

In the Institution I was not allowed to learn to use even ordinary tools (a spade tail, a hoe, etc.).

**At home I learned to fix up many household things.
So, I feel very handy!**





„...The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential”.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24, point 1 (b)

**In the Institution, we had no possibility
to invite guests for tea.**


Now, since I live in the community, I often have guests and always serve them something!



„States Parties to this Convention recognize the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community“.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 19





People with disabilities should be offered support in a respectful manner, which would value their personalities and would help them to achieve a full life in the community. This kind of support can be offered only in the community, in families, or in family like services.

The self-advocacy group was founded in October 2013 within the “People with disabilities – actors in preventing and combating discrimination” Project, implemented by Keystone Moldova Association with the financial support of the Soros – Moldova Foundation.

The group is formed of 15 adults with intellectual/mental disabilities, who have been deinstitutionalized from the Orhei Institution for children and young adults with mental disabilities. They were reintegrated into the community in the period from 2010-2014 within the frame of the „Community for All - Moldova” Program, implemented by Keystone Moldova.

The mission of the self-advocacy group is to promote the rights of people with disabilities according to the „UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities” point of view and especially with reference to Article 19 „Living independently and being included in the community”. The members of the Group wish to live in a society where people with disabilities would not live in Institutions.

The Group holds meetings regularly. During these meetings the group members learn to become self-advocates, and are helped to understand the rights stipulated in the „UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities”.

The content of this brochure was developed together with the members of the self-advocacy group and reflects their own opinions.



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WHAT HAVE YOU CHOSEN?