

Article by Mr. Milan Saranovic, Representative of the Association of Youth with disabilities of Montenegro.

Spanish Version

Mr. Saranovic has given ENIL an overview of the situation of people with disabilities and the Independent Living Movement in Montenegro. The Association of Youth with disabilities, in cooperation with other Associations in Montenegro is working hard in order to create services that will offer disabled people the support they need and in the promotion of Independent Living. They don't have the financial support of the Government yet, but they manage to keep working and have to stand the slow pace of the Government in order to include disability in their policies; the same Government that is proving to be inefficient in developing better laws that ensure the rights of disabled people in this country.

Independent living in Montenegro

The situation of the Independent Living movement in Montenegro is not good.

Persons with disabilities in Montenegro are facing lack of support and services that would enable them to live a more independent and self-supported life.

The State of Montenegro has not regulated personal assistance, accessible transport or community living amongst other things. Some improvement has been made in day care centres but such institutions can not be included in the story of independent living.

Independent Living activities are implemented by organizations of persons with disabilities who provide support services.

Services provided are:

- Pilot project of Personal assistance in Nikšić – the first pilot project on PA in Montenegro. A local organization of persons with visual impairment and the Association “PLEGIE” (paraplegics association) started in December of 2009 the preparation phase which lasted until April of 2010 and included:
 - Study visits to Centre for Independent Living from Serbia in Jagodina
 - Organization of seminar for potential assistants and users of PA
 - Establishing a criteria for personal assistants selection
 - Selection of assistants and users

The project started in April and lasted for six months. The number of users varied from 10 to 8 people. After three months of implementation a survey was conducted among users and assistants. One of the features of this pilot project is that it was a cross disability project among people with mobility impairments and visual impairments.

- Service for guide and assistance dogs – Association of Youth with disabilities of Montenegro

- Pilot projects of Assistance in classroom - Parents associations from Herceg Novi, Podgorica and Pljevlja
- Psychosocial support - Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro
- Legal support - Association of Paraplegics of Montenegro; Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro
- Student's service, including accessible transportation.
- Association of Youth with Disabilities

Note: all this activities are not systematically regulated and financed by the Government.

According to the Strategy on integration of persons with disabilities the Law on Personal Assistance was planed to be approved in 2009, but at the moment it has not become a reality and it is uncertain when this will happen. Now, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs intends to have pilot projects first and approve laws afterwards.

Recently, the Parliament of Montenegro has adopted changes in the legislation concerning the education of children with disabilities that includes a form of assistance to pupils with disabilities which will be done on voluntary basis. This illustrates that some political bodies are supporting persons with disabilities and their independent living.