

PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

(Applicants can use this template, when initiating partnerships with partners from Donor or other eligible countries)

Call for project proposal:

Active citizens Fund Croatia – Large projects

<https://acfcroatia.hr>

Name of lead applicant organisation:

Association for Self-Advocacy

Short description of the organisation's mission, goals, main programme areas and key activities:

The Association for Self-Advocacy (ASA) *strives to promote and protect the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and aims to achieve the full social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.* ASA, the first NGO of people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia and in this region was established in October 2003 in Zagreb. Most of ASA's members experienced some form of segregation, discrimination and humiliation. ASA currently has 35 members in Zagreb, and supports 16 self-advocacy groups with more than self-advocates throughout Croatia.

Since its establishment, the struggle for the right to live and receive support in the community, the struggle for human dignity, and the protection of the rights of people with intellectual disabilities are the main goals of ASA. In achieving these goals, ASA uses all legally permissible means of democratic action: proposing amendments on legislation which discriminate against persons with intellectual disabilities, public awareness raising and campaigning, expanding the self-advocacy movement within Croatia and abroad to empower people with intellectual disabilities to cooperate with national and international organizations, and promoting and protecting their rights.

ASA has had several successes that had direct impact on the quality of life and human rights of many people with intellectual disabilities. After years of advocacy, at the end of 2013 ASA was able to ensure the adoption of the new Voters Register Act, which gave the right to vote to people who have been fully deprived of their legal capacity. ASA has also had a very important role in the amendment process of the Assembly Act from 2014. Introduced changes abolished many restrictions imposed to persons deprived of legal capacity in terms of their assemble rights. Also, through participation in the working group for drafting of the new Law on Professional Rehabilitation ASA's efforts made possible for employed persons with disabilities to put their disability based rights on hold for the duration of the employment, thus avoiding permanent loss of these rights as it was the case before.

A representative of ASA is currently a member of the work group commissioned to create new Family Act proposal. The Family Act is extremely important because it regulates legal areas of guardianship and legal capacity thus directly having effect on almost 20 000 citizens deprived of legal capacity, most of which are persons with intellectual and mental disabilities. By taking part in the work group we try to ensure that the normative solutions of the new Family Act lean on the Article 12 of the UN CRPD to the maximum extent possible and that the current guardianship system be abandoned and replaced by the system of supported decision making in foreseeable future.

Since 2006 ASA publishes easy to read information (e.g. ASA's quarterly newsletter "The Voice of Self-Advocates" and a translation into Croatian easy to read of the UNCRPD), and since 2012 it trains assistants and self-advocates in producing easy to read materials according to Inclusion Europe's standards. ASA considers making the voice of self-advocates heard a significant success: By supporting self-advocates to hold presentations in various media platforms (newspaper, radio and TV), sharing information on its web and Facebook pages, publishing its quarterly newsletters, producing video stories and testimonies of self-advocates, cooperating with international organizations such as Inclusion Europe, and participating in numerous national and international conferences, ASA ensures that self-advocates are heard by the public. For a large number of self-advocates and people with intellectual disabilities, ASA is the only place where they can freely and without fear express their dissatisfaction with their support staff and services, and take action to change things which they are not satisfied with.

Main objectives of the project:

Advocating for the full and effective implementation of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

ASA will mostly focus on certain areas it considers particularly important for Croatian self-advocates. These are primarily Articles 12 - Equal recognition before the law, **Article 19** - Living independently and being included in the community **and Article 29** - of the UNCRPD - Participation in political and public life

Although Croatia currently deinstitutionalizes and transforms its institutions into community based services, there are still many risks that threaten this progress. Transformed institutions continued to work according to the same rules and regulations that were effective in institutions hence many restrictions are still present. These restrictions are still being imposed on persons with intellectual disabilities despite the fact that they live in the community now. The restrictions are most clearly visible in the areas of freedom and choice opportunities, making decisions, freedom of movement, protection of privacy and other human rights. There is a significant space and the need for action of self-advocates who will try, by carrying out advocacy activities, to ensure that the support starts to be provided in a way that respects human rights of persons with intellectual disabilities. We shall specifically focus on development of methodology and practice that will enable greater freedom and independence of self-advocates in relation to the staff and services that now provide them with support. We shall also advocate for the abolishment of all existing solutions and practices that disadvantage self-advocates in realization of their right to independent living and inclusion in the community in a way guaranteed by the Article 19 of the UN CRPD. This means that we shall mainly focus on the changes of current by-laws that regulate the area of providing support for living in the community.

Support and networking of self-advocates with other organizations at national, regional and European level

We shall continue collaboration and transfer of know-how to at least 10 self-advocacy groups and associations in 10 cities throughout Croatia. ASA will train and mentor these organizations in the practical application of the UNCRPD, and distributes and discusses with them its brochures and easy to read materials. This task also involves training and mentoring of self-advocates and assistants from these local organizations in self-determination and self-advocacy. ASA will also be involved on

development and strengthening of existing network of Croatian self-advocates. ASA will provide organizational help to all Croatian self-advocacy groups through various types of trainings like training on self-advocacy, self-determination, production of easy to read materials, organization of self-advocacy group or self-advocacy association.

Issues the project wants to tackle:

Discrimination of persons with intellectual disabilities
Deprivation of legal capacity
Participation of the persons with disabilities in everyday activities in their local communities
Empowerment of persons with intellectual disabilities in order to be able to protect their rights and become active citizens

Solutions it proposes:

Self - advocates groups form different local communities throughout Croatia networked and united in join advocacy goal to promote full implementation of the UNCRPD in Croatia.

Main target groups:

Persons with intellectual disabilities
Assistants of self-advocacy groups and organizations
Students
Service providers
General public

Foreseen role/contribution of the partner:

Transfer of knowledge/experience in:
1. self-advocacy for persons with intellectual disabilities,
2. protecting and promoting of human rights of persons with disabilities (particularly the persons with intellectual disabilities) in other countries.

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