

Training for an active role in society

Belgium (Flanders) - Onafhankelijk Leven vzw

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Freedom School is a five-day training course for people with disabilities. This interactive summer course with 18 disabled participants (plus personal assistants) focused on developing talents and skills for self-advocacy and implementing personal projects that can contribute to the better participation and self-determination of people with disabilities. The aims of this training are to strengthen the Independent Living movement by attracting more volunteers/activists, to improve the skills and capacities of current volunteers, and to create future leaders.

“After five days of Freedom School I am so full of energy and ready to go home for action! The group feeling was great and the support we got from Onafhankelijk Leven was amazing.

—Project participant

FACTS & FIGURES

- 18 people have completed the training.
- 5 self-chosen projects have been created and are being followed-up.
- 7 participants are now volunteers at Onafhankelijk Leven vzw, some of whom are active as ambassadors of the organization. As such, they represent the organization at various external meetings and are the core of the volunteer force.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Because people with disabilities often do not get the same opportunities as others, the focus of the training course is on learning about and discovering the talents of the disabled, and developing these talents. Following the training, participants play an active role in public life and have the skills to organize their own projects independently, creating a positive impact and greater societal awareness regarding the needs and abilities of disabled people.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The philosophy behind the Freedom School training course is to let the participants see that they can make a real difference in their community. Building confidence and experiencing personal success with self-chosen projects is facilitated, such that the trainees come to see themselves not just as

participants, volunteers, or clients but as real experts and future leaders. They have the responsibility to realize change in society.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The Freedom School concept can easily be copied and adjusted to local differences and preferences (e.g. the specific expectations and knowledge level of participants). Costs depend mostly on the availability of accessible accommodation and external trainers. Cost efficiency: The training gives social return in improving inclusion, strengthening the IL movement and delivering future leaders.

Photo: Yes

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<http://www.onafhankelijkleven.be/blog/detail/benieuwd-wat-de-deelnemers-van-de-freedom-school-vonden>

[http://www.onafhankelijkleven.be/frontend/files/userfiles/files/Programma_promo_def%203_0\(4\).pdf](http://www.onafhankelijkleven.be/frontend/files/userfiles/files/Programma_promo_def%203_0(4).pdf)