

Living alone with individualized support

Croatia (Zagreb) – Association for Promoting Inclusion (API)

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The Association for Promoting Inclusion (API) is a non-governmental organization established in 1997 in Zagreb, Croatia. Its mission is to promote the development of a society in which people with intellectual disabilities have equal opportunities, their contributions are valued, and their human rights are respected. The focus of API's work has been to develop models of community-based services, such as supported housing and specialized foster family care, to enable children and adults with intellectual disabilities to move from large residential institutions to a life in the community.

“Our mission is to promote the development of a society in which people with intellectual disabilities have equal opportunities, their contributions are valued, and their human rights are respected.”

—Prof. Borka TEODOROVIĆ, President, API

FACTS & FIGURES

- Established community-based supported housing services for 250 people with intellectual disabilities in 8 cities in Croatia.
- Supported work activities and day programs for over 150 people in 8 cities.
- API's community-based service model has been recognized as an example of good practice and is being replicated throughout the field. Further, API's expert team has been a key partner with the Croatian Ministry of Social Policy and Youth in an international project on de-institutionalization.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Traditionally, persons with intellectual disabilities have been placed in institutions without their consent and without respect for their personal needs and desires. Instead, parents, social workers, and other professionals have made decisions on their behalf. In general, these institutions have been violating the basic human rights of people with disabilities, keeping them isolated, segregated, and stigmatized.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

API offers supported housing services to persons with intellectual disabilities in rented apartments. In 2000, API negotiated the recognition of supported housing as a social welfare service for persons with intellectual disabilities, and identified a loophole in the Social Welfare Law that enabled it to register its program as a residential institution offering services in the community. In 2003 the law was amended, and 'organized housing' was introduced as a new type of service. In 2008 the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth developed the regulatory mechanism for organized housing, and API has continued to provide services, including employment and volunteering activities.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Over the years API has strived to increase the capacity for community-based service in Croatia and in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. To date, it has supported the establishment of subsidiaries in several cities in Croatia and has shared its models of community-based services with organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Macedonia.

Photo: Yes

CONTACT

Slavenka MARTINOVIĆ, Director

validus@coovalidus.hr

Validus, Centre for Adult Education