



The situation in North Macedonia

Education

Primary education

- ▶ Although the law in our country provides equal conditions for all children when it comes to the educational process of children with special needs, we can see that they do not get the same opportunities as children with typical development.
- ▶ A small number of children with special needs complete their primary education in normal primary schools
- ▶ In our country, the special primary schools have been actively functioning, but with the change of the law on primary education in 2019 and the goal for full inclusion, the special primary schools are slowly being renamed into resource centers and there is a change in their functioning. But full inclusion has its drawbacks, because the schools in our country are not fully equipped to be able to take over all children with special needs.



Secondary education

- ▶ The high schools for special needs children are still in function and we have several in the whole territory of our country.
- ▶ Children with special educational needs who are involved in the educational process in special secondary schools do not get the same opportunity as children with typical development.
- ▶ After finishing their primary education, these students are usually enrolled in special high schools where their education is based on learning skills and trades that will help them later to be placed on the labor market. But if they do not have the opportunity to continue their education and remain only with primary education, they do not have the right to be placed on the labor market and therefore do not have the opportunity to contribute for themselves and their families.



High education

- ▶ Very few people with disabilities continue their education at universities. Because, persons who have not passed the state graduation do not have the right to higher education, so the persons who have graduated in special high schools and have not passed the state graduation do not have the right to higher education.
- ▶ When it comes to the accessibility of the faculties we can say that in our country there are sound books but it is not an example of all faculties, access ramps and elevators and printed materials.
- ▶ But people with disabilities who have decided to continue their education at university do not get the opportunity from a personal assistant or a sign language interpreter, they are left alone.
- ▶ These people have the right to use all the services offered by the faculties, but they do not have adequate opportunities for that.



Social protection

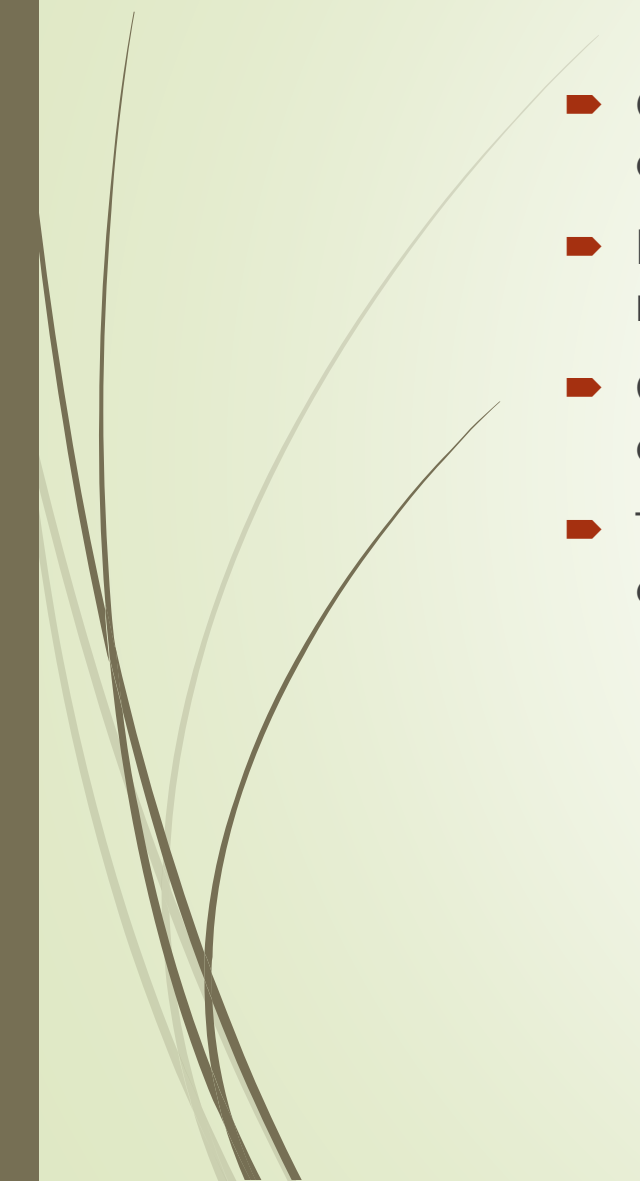
- ▶ There are 30 centers for social work in our country. The headquarters of these centers are mostly located in an urban environment which is a disadvantage for rural areas where there are no offices under the social work centers.
- ▶ There are currently no special social service centers offering daily and temporary residence services. There are only day care centers for people with disabilities in almost all municipalities where the SWC is headquartered.
- ▶ In these day care centers we have users of different ages, with big heterogeneity.
- ▶ Day care centers do not have enough capacity and staff to be able to function normally because the users are people from 18-50 years, with different disabilities and different needs.
- ▶ These day care centers work in the period from 8 am to 2 pm, which is not very helpful for the parents because they do not get the necessary free time of 8 working hours to be able to establish an employment relationship.


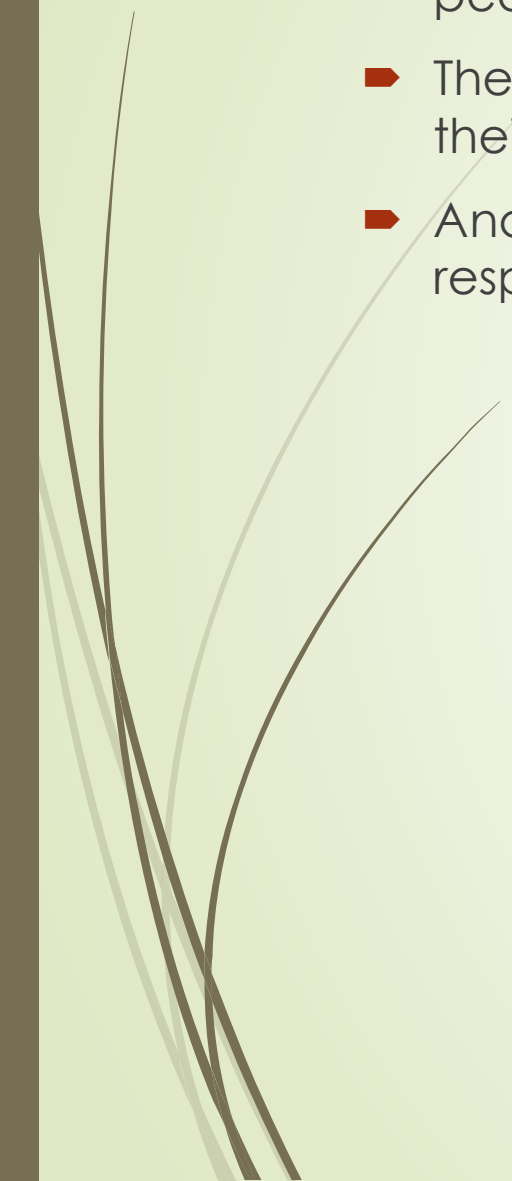
Small group homes

- ▶ When we talk about protection outside the family we can only identify small group homes that are relatively new.
- ▶ People with severe mental disabilities or combined disabilities who were in the center of Demir Kapija are slowly approaching the small group homes due to the deinstitutionalization that occurs in our country.
- ▶ There are several small group homes on the territory of the capital and several on the territory of Macedonia.
- ▶ For this small group homes to be successful, personal from Demir Kapija center have been working with the users for their independence for a long time so that they can live independently in small group homes. Eight users are living in the two small group homes located in the capital city.



Foster homes

- ▶ On the other hand, there are foster families. These families open the doors of their homes for children with special needs.
 - ▶ But there are only a few families across the country. This foster families are more popular in the small cities and villages.
 - ▶ Children with special needs can stay in foster families until the age of 18 and then return to the cities where they come from.
 - ▶ Therefore, increasing the capacity of small group homes would help these children to continue living independently.
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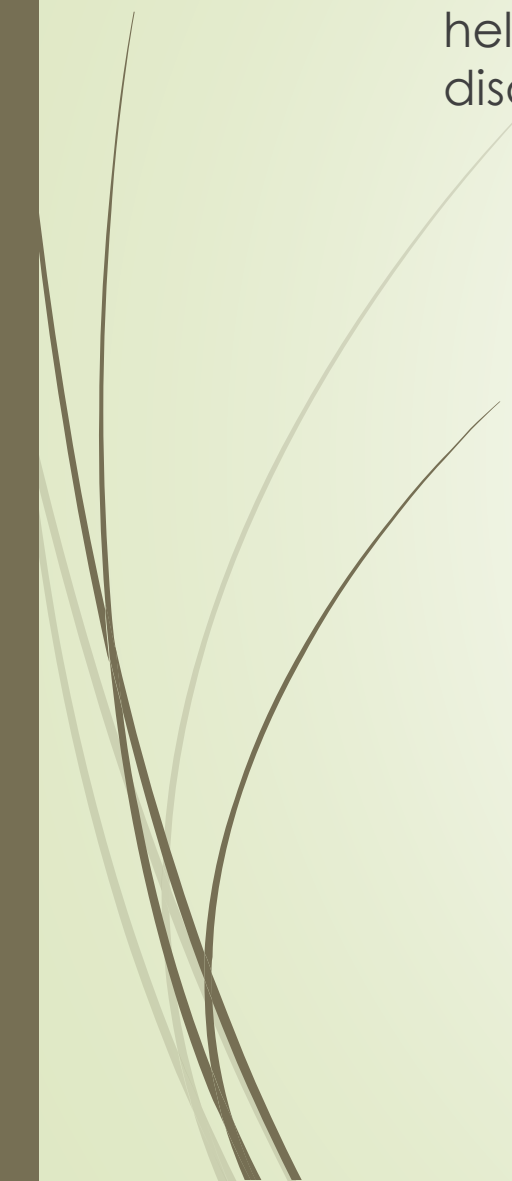
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- The biggest problem faced by people with disabilities and their families is the period when these people are left without their parents. Because 99% of the people with disabilities live with their parents.
 - Then these people are left without any protection and many of them continue their lives with their brothers or sisters.
 - And the problem begins with the change of residence, change of habits, responsibilities, work, space and environment in which they live.
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Health protection



- ▶ People with disabilities enjoy the same health care rights as other people.
- ▶ But there is also a special organized health care for children with special needs. For successful realization of this health care, there are 2 development centers (development counseling) and 2 specialized institutions for mental health (one of them in Skopje and Bitola) for early detection, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of functional growth and development of risky born children.
- ▶ When we talk about health care, primary prevention is very important for promoting health and reducing disability.
- ▶ A special goal in the field of prevention is to raise the level of community awareness about people with disabilities, as well as raising the awareness of people with disabilities about their rights, position and needs.

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- Secondary prevention - these are activities that are aimed at detecting the health problem at an early stage in an individual or in the entire population.
 - Tertiary prevention includes rehabilitation and support measures. Rehabilitation is helping people with developmental disabilities cope with their functional disabilities.
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Working environment


- ▶ Very few companies in the Republic of North Macedonia are interested in employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This contributes to the small number of people with special needs to establish employment. Commonly cited reasons for the low level of employment of people with disabilities include the following: beliefs that people with disabilities have lower productivity, attitudes and management closeness, and fears of additional costs.
- ▶ The Employment Agency offers many financial benefits to employers who employ people with disabilities. Within the available financial means, non-refundable funds are granted by the Special Fund for
 - ▶ Employment of a disabled person for an indefinite period of time, for which 20 average salaries are awarded for one employment or 40 average salaries for persons moving in a wheelchair or completely blind persons
 - ▶ Adaptation to a job, for which non-refundable funds up to 1.500 euros,
 - ▶ Procurement of equipment, for which up to 200 average salaries are awarded, for which the criterion is the number of employed disabled persons ;
 - ▶ Job training of disabled people for employment.
- ▶ The employment agency has a total of 1574 people with special needs who are registered as unemployed.



Accessibility



- ▶ Accessibility is a prerequisite for people with disabilities to live independently and fully and equally participate in society. Without access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communication, including information and communication technologies and systems, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, persons with disabilities do not have equal opportunities to participate in their societies.
- ▶ Accessibility in our country is at a medium level. In the last few years, efforts have been made for greater accessibility of people with disabilities.
- ▶ With the increase of awareness among people and the desire of people with disabilities to be more and more included in society, great efforts are being made to change the infrastructure.
- ▶ So, in several museums in the capital, Braille books were made, videos in sign language, an access ramp, an elevator were set up.

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- The universities are also equipped with ramps and elevators, but this is not the case with the primary and secondary schools. Many of the primary and secondary schools are equipped only with a ramp or only with an elevator and there are some where there is no accessibility.
 - If we look at the level of the whole country, we can see that big changes need to be made for these people to have the opportunity to be included in everyday society.
 - People with disabilities do not have access to libraries, cinemas, parks, beaches, toilets, gyms, markets, public transport.

Political life

- ▶ Although every person over the age of 18 has the right to vote, people with disabilities do not enjoy the same rights as other people. The Electoral Code states that persons have the right to vote only in the place where they have a permanent residence. Therefore, the persons accommodated in the rehabilitation centers, homes, foster families are not able to vote.
- ▶ There are no statistics on people with disabilities in the country, which is a serious shortcoming, especially for policy making and taking measures to improve the position of citizens with disabilities.
- ▶ People with disabilities are not included in the political life in our country. During these past years, there has not been a single MP with a disability. Additionally, a person with a disability was neither appointed Minister nor nominated and elected Mayor.
- ▶ The law does not provide for other measures by which persons with disabilities will be able to vote on an equal basis with others on election day. Namely, ballots with Braille are not provided, or another person should sign the list that the person with impaired vision voted, there are no alternative polling stations, no sign language interpreters are used, the introduction of tactile voting instructions is not present. or electronic voting machines or instructions for simple voting in an easily understandable format are not available.



THANK YOU!