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CRIPCAMP

Disability Rights in Times of Conflict and Calamity

REPORT

of the Study session co-organised by the
European Network for Independent Living – Youth
(ENIL Youth Network)
in cooperation with the Council of Europe Youth Department

12 – 17 June 2023

European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France

This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

Executive summary

The "CRIPCAMP: Disability Rights in Times of Conflict and Calamity" study session had the goal of empowering young people with disabilities to actively advocate for their rights, especially during challenging times such as crises and calamities. Key topics like the effects of climate change and rising living costs were a central focus. The session, which included women from various backgrounds and with different disabilities, allowed participants to learn about the support mechanisms offered by the Council of Europe (CoE) in the realm of disability rights.

Not only was this a learning experience, but it also provided networking opportunities, which spurred the decision to initiate a series of follow-up discussions called "CripCamp Talks."



Figure 1- CripCamp plenary discussion

Introduction

This report outlines the origins, aims, and participant profiles of the “CRIPCAMP: Disability Rights in Times of Conflict and Calamity” study session.

Initially conceived by team leader Peadar, the session was inspired by the transformative role of socialising and networking seen in the original CRIP CAMP in the USA. The aim was to create a secure and encouraging space to inform young people with disabilities about their rights, drawing from historical movements for inspiration.

Key objectives included:

- Increasing participants’ awareness of their rights and helping them feel more connected within their network;
- Providing information about where to find support from entities like the Council of Europe, and introducing them to relevant legal frameworks addressing climate change, conflicts, and autonomous living in crisis periods;
- Encouraging participants to further discuss and organise events on the tackled topics.
- Offering a platform for participants to draft recommendations to the Council of Europe, leveraging lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine.

The session hosted 10 women, along with nine personal assistants, bringing together a wide array of experiences and backgrounds. Despite some participants facing health issues and travel difficulties, the session proceeded with vibrant and productive discussions on disability rights in the context of conflicts, climate change, and economic challenges.

As part of the session, the participants visited the Council of Europe (CoE) Palais, gaining firsthand insight into the organization's function. They also had discussions with representatives from the European Youth Foundation (EYF), learning about the financial aid offered by EYF and its stance on climate change.

The session equipped participants with a deeper understanding of the Council of Europe’s social charter and youth policy, enriched by dialogues with guest speakers including a disability rights rapporteur from the Advisory Council. This session marked a step towards fostering proactive engagement and broader understanding of the discussed issues, setting the stage for future collaborative actions.

Results and conclusions

The study session yielded substantial findings and conclusions related to its focal themes. The primary takeaway underscored the need for concrete follow-up actions, encompassing the development of recommendations and the realisation of CripCamp Talks.

Furthermore, the study session emphasised the critical role of diverse strategies in advancing the process of deinstitutionalisation. Several areas have been identified as

pivotal points for taking action:

- Revising the upper age limit of 30 years for youth programmes within the CoE Youth Department and the European Youth Foundation, to afford more opportunities for learning and engagement to young individuals with disabilities, who typically face more hurdles and engage in activism later in life compared to their contemporaries.
- Promoting greater inclusivity within the CoE at large, especially through the pursuit of equal employment opportunities. Given that individuals with disabilities are expected to represent 15% of the population, it is incumbent upon the CoE to ensure this demographic is proportionately reflected among its civil servants and political representatives, in the youth sector and beyond.
- Refining the checklist and crisis response protocols at the European Youth Centre in Budapest and Strasbourg, guided by the latest insights and a nuanced understanding of varied needs.
- Maintaining support for the CripCamp initiative, aimed at nurturing enduring relationships among participants and empowering them to address relevant subjects prominently in all areas of their activism and day-to-day lives.

These conclusions spotlight the urgency of implementing practical steps to tackle key challenges and enhance inclusivity in the realm of disability rights.

The final evaluation revealed that the majority of participants felt more knowledgeable, better informed, and more inspired and empowered by the study session.

*"Everything that was told has increased my knowledge in these areas."
"I thought it was a very special experience to be there and I also learned a lot thanks for that!"*

One criticism was that the group was very accommodating to each other and thus didn't engage in deeper discussions and the exchange of arguments. Another point of feedback was that the team could have facilitated certain thematic-focused sessions more deeply to encourage a greater exchange among participants and enhance the impact of those discussions.

"... I wish we had got some more information at times, for example explaining the relevant article in the CRPD before we were expected to discuss it..."

The participants particularly enjoyed the interactive methods and inclusive approach that were integrated into the foundation of this study session.

"We were a diverse group of participants, and throughout the week I think we all learned a lot about how to be inclusive and enable everyone to participate. The reflection sessions at the end of the day really helped with this for me."

Overall, when participants were asked about the key take-away from the study session, they have shared:

*"A lot of new information, new acquaintances and feelings."
"The exercises were particularly interesting to me because everyone could participate"*

and express their opinions. And he came out of his cocoon of fear."

"Engagement, a whole set of new friends and the spirit to keep in contact with the group to make some real changes"

"Inspiration and ideas for further projects!" "Contacts/networks of new friends."

"A strong feeling that this work is important and urgent, and it strengthens my own work to know that others care about and are working on these issues as well!"

"Some people I met and some ideas on empowerment."

"That there are very big differences in Europe regarding how things such as care are arranged in a crisis or sometimes even without a crisis."

"That if you have a disability you always spend more money on resources but also on adjustments in, for example, your home and that this is just unfair."

"I had some prior knowledge, but of course, I've also learned some new things! Especially regarding the work CoE does in this field and the support available from them. It has inspired me to attempt to use some of these tools at home later."

Programme – Inputs and Discussions

The study session underscored the critical role of active citizenship and civic education in advancing disability rights advocacy. While acknowledging the diverse national contexts the participants come from, it was emphasized that a common understanding of the importance of human rights, and the tools available to promote them, is essential, including during periods of conflict and calamity. The discussions concentrated on several key thematic blocks to foster this understanding, including the identification of barriers and crafting solutions in relation to:

- Disability rights in times of conflict
- Disability rights and climate change
- Disability rights and the trend of rising living costs.

Disability Rights in Times of Conflict

During this segment, the group pinpointed several pressing issues and devised immediate responses/solutions, which were subsequently assessed for their respective pros and cons:

Problem	Solution	Thoughts
Support from the Red Cross and other big charities doesn't always reach disabled people	Disability rights organisations should form their own umbrella organisation based on emergency agreement (similar to UN, NATO) to be able to efficiently send support and dispatch emergency funds to those in need. Improve disability perspectives in organisations like Red Cross (using the shared documents described in third row)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would this create even greater gap? - How to secure needed resources and funding for such cooperation? - Could each organisation of people with disabilities work nationally with their Red Crosses?
Local level support mechanisms are not enough and are not accessible, and are often not at all inclusive for people with disabilities.	Training and workshops for city fire departments, Red Cross and other involved organisations on sensibility towards disability rights and vice versa learn from fire departments and all what to do in case of emergencies. Review city plans, evacuation plans, bomb-shelters etc.	
National level support mechanisms are not enough and are not accessible, and are often	Proposal for cooperation across the borders with shared documents: checklist for including people with disabilities, contact information and initial plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hilde will email Abilis about offering accessible buses to Ukraine for evacuation - evacuation

not at all inclusive for people with disabilities.	ENIL and/or EDF could have an emergency council, help each other provide what's needed and coordinate.	- Uloba has buses
Assessment "this person is not to be saved"	UNCRPD should make it unlawful to leave out people with disabilities from evacuation and emergency plans. Medical schools should have emergency courses with special focus on people with disabilities.	

Disability Rights in Times of Climate Change/Crisis

In this segment, the group discussed the necessary alterations and strategic foundations needed to instigate change. Central themes included heatwaves, rural area devastation, informational deficits, and the general negligence towards alerts and evacuation plans. The discussions underscored the particular vulnerability of people with disabilities, constituting about 15% of the population, during crises. Several potential solutions were raised:

- Establishing accessible heat shelters such as swimming pools, parks, and libraries for cooling off;
- Alerting the populace during heatwaves to maintain hydration and follow expert dietary advice;
- Enhancing pavement width and accessibility to facilitate smooth traffic flow and ensure safety during evacuations and emergencies;
- Prioritising the inclusion of people with disabilities in pre-disaster planning and emergency training initiatives;
- Exploring cost-effective solutions that may outperform pricier alternatives;
- Including people with disabilities in steering groups to create globally inclusive emergency protocols;
- Developing practical, municipal strategies that dictate compulsory training on assisting disabled individuals in emergencies and implementing a system to locate and check on them during crises;
- Encouraging young individuals with disabilities to join green clubs and rebellion groups, thus bolstering their voices and endorsing scientifically-backed solutions.

Open questions remained regarding the environmental impact of certain medical equipment and the potential for campaigns promoting more sustainable alternatives.

Additional Costs of Disability

The group spotlighted the factors that heighten the vulnerability of people with disabilities to the rising cost of living trends, including increased energy needs and lower employment rates. They proposed solutions such as:

- Financial aid for young individuals with disabilities, including discounted utility rates;
- Augmented support in the employment sector and better resource assessment;
- Promoting more accessible mainstream solutions.

The session also traversed discussions on activism and empowerment, highlighting the vitality of optimism, intersectionality, and community. Participants debated the current state of activism, raising critical questions regarding its effectiveness and the essence of inclusive activism.

Moreover, the group delved deep into the nuances of the UNCRPD, focusing primarily on the merits of inclusive education and independent living, juxtaposed with the institutionalisation of young individuals with disabilities. Detailed discussions on advocacy campaigns for deinstitutionalising education and living environments for people with disabilities were a focal point.

In conclusion, participants enriched the programme with their personal experiences and insights into different national contexts, emphasising the varying degrees of disability rights protection across CoE member states. A strong consensus emerged on the urgency for higher standards to be embraced by all member states and the CoE institution itself, urging a more inclusive and supportive approach to disability rights.

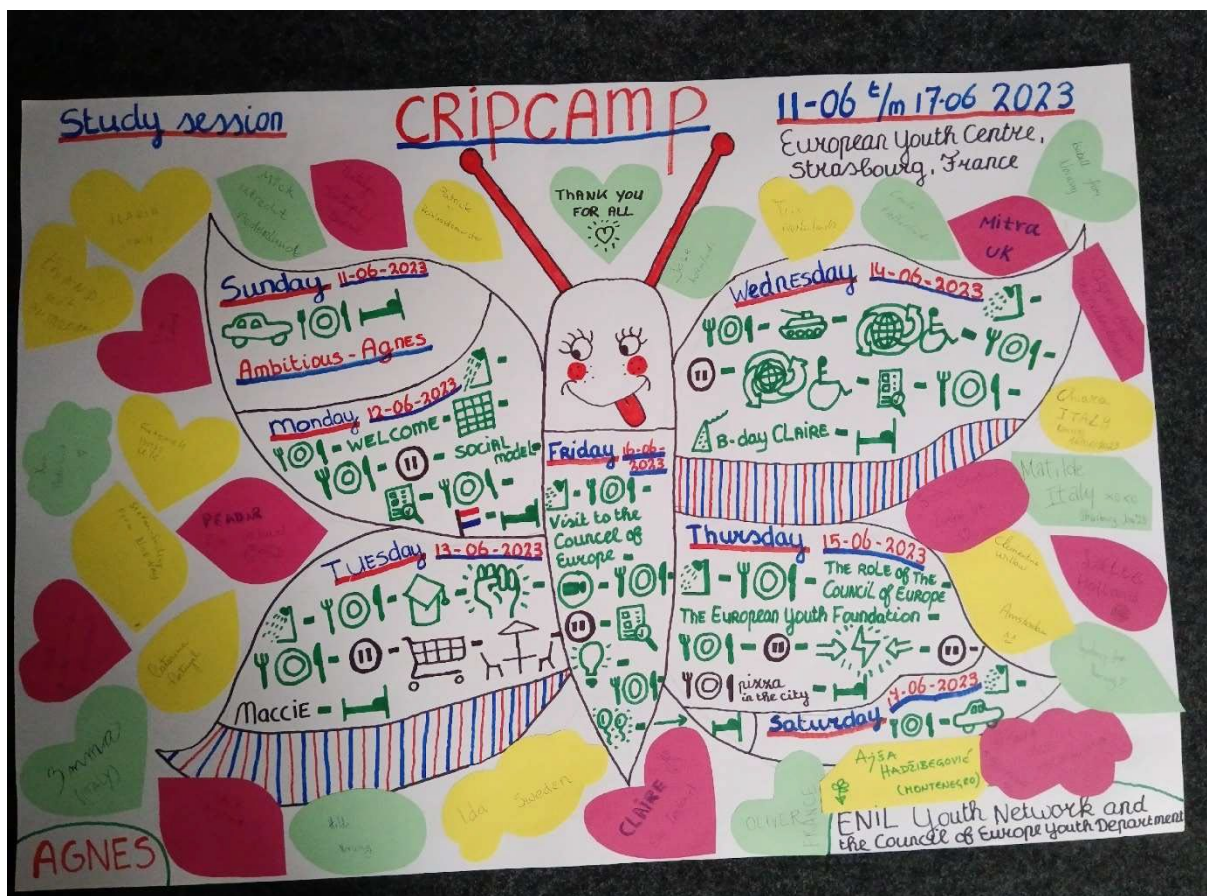


Figure 2 Visual report by participant

Follow-up activities

The study session yielded significant findings and conclusions relating to its themes. The primary conclusion emphasised the necessity for concrete action in terms of follow-up actions, including the formulation of recommendations and the initiation of CripCamp Talks. However, regarding future support from ENIL, the team maintains a reserved outlook.

Consequently, participants have organised both amongst themselves and in conjunction with the organising team to delve into the prospects of orchestrating CripCamps in the future. A blueprint is already in the works for CripCamp Talks, aimed at enhancing the multiplying effects of the study session discussions and nurturing the germination of new ideas. The inaugural CripCamp Talks/follow-up meeting transpired on 16th July, fostering dialogues around potential themes for future CripCamps, exploring funding avenues, and brainstorming shorter online activities. Identified discussion topics encompassed: Employment; Inclusive Education; 'Sexuality and Disability: How Do We Form Our Identities?' and 'Managing Privacy with Personal Assistance'. Moreover, the session birthed two fresh topics which were direct offshoots of the study session: a) fostering new disabled activists and delving into the dynamics of activism; and b) strategising on engaging other movements to foster inclusivity in their activism endeavours.

Looking ahead, the strategy also envisions crafting long-term recommendations to bolster disability rights amidst crises.

Appendices

Programme

Sunday, 11 June

Arrivals

19:00 Dinner

20:30 Welcoming evening (room 0.1)

Monday, 12 June

09:30 Opening of the study session, with MARIE FARIGOULES, Executive director of the European Youth Centre and RUI GOMES Head of the Education Division

Getting to know each other, the activity and the youth centre

11:00 Break

11:30 Teambuilding

13:00 Lunch and break

16:00 Disability Rights and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) 17:30-18:00 Reflection and review of the day

19:00 Dinner

20:00-21.00 - Intercultural evening

Tuesday, 13 June

09:30 Preventing exclusion in times of Crises: the importance of article 24 of CRPD

11:00 Break

11:30 Tools and Skills for empowerment

13:00 Lunch

FREE AFTERNOON and

@ 15.30 optional joint visit to the town center

19:00 Dinner out

Wednesday, 14 June

09:30 Conflict and Crisis with MARINA KITAIGOROSKI, Abilis Foundation (followed by practical exercise) and Tatyana, mother of a young person with physical and

mental disabilities from war affected region in Ukraine

11:00 Break

11:30 Climate change and disability rights (followed by practical exercise)

13:00 Lunch break

16:00 Formulating arguments for

advocacy 17:30 Reflection groups

19:00 Dinner

20:00 Movie night

Thursday, 15 June

09:30 The role of the Council of Europe with Anca -Ruxandra Pandea, Coordinator of the youth campaign for revitalising democracy and

1. European Social Charter, with ZIYA TANYAR, legal adviser, Division of Collective Complaints, European Social Rights Committee
2. Policy rights, with LANA COP, Youth Policy Division, Youth Department

11:00 Break

11.30 Support by the European Youth Foundation with MARGIT BARNA, MARCIO BARCELOS and NATALIA MILITELLO:

1. Financial support
2. Promoting impact of youth projects
3. Responding to crises

13:00 Lunch break

15:00-17.00 Deep dive into advocacy arguments on 3Cs: Conflict, Climate change and Cost of living

18:00-21.00 Dinner out

Friday, 16 June

09:30 Visit to the Council of Europe

12.00 Talk with Timothy Rowies, Rapporteur on Mainstreaming Disability Issues, Council of Europe Joint Council on Youth

13:00 Lunch break

15:00 Collaboration and networking lab

16:30 *Break*

17:00-18:00 Evaluation and closing session.

19:00 *Dinner*

20:00 Farewell Party night

Saturday, 17 June

DEPARTURES

List of participants

Bosnia and Herzegovina

LJUBOJEVIC Bojana

Finland

HEIKKINEN Lauri AL OBAIDI Saif

Hungary

IVICSICS Borbala

Italy

MANGHI Emma

MANGHI Matilde

FARANDA Ilaria

SAMMITO Chiara

Ireland

O'DEA Peadar

ROONEY Claire

The Netherlands

DIRKEN Agnes

KOSTER Alexandra

Caroline VAN DER MEER

Lotte Ana Maria GROOFF

Thiandi

GROOFF Trix ROCCO SILVA Carla

SMITS Jose

HANSEN Mick

WILLOW Clementine

Norway

ØVERLI Ingeborg Aurora

KROHN Lise-Lotte

LARSEN Isabell

NILSSON

Hild

e Sofie FJELDSTAD

Stef

an

Portugal

VITORINO Catarina

da COSTA RODRIGUES OLIVEIRA Natalyn Isabel

Sweden

HANNSON Ida

United Kingdom

SATHE Miah

NOSRATZADEH

Fatemeh

AMIRI Mitra

Council of Europe

Directorate General of Human Rights

Ziya TANYAR, Division of Collective Complaints, European Social Rights Committee

Secretariat of the Youth Department

Marie FARIGOULES, Executive Director of the European Youth Centre

Rui GOMES, Head of Division Education and Training

Lana COP, Project officer, Youth Policy Division

Margit BARNA, European Youth Foundation

Marcio BARCELOS, European Youth Foundation

Natalia MILITELLO, European Youth Foundation

Patrick NORLAIN, Programme assistant

Anca-Ruxandra PANDEA, Coordinator of the youth campaign for revitalising democracy

Advisory Council on Youth / Joint Council on Youth

Timothy ROWIES, Rapporteur on Mainstreaming Disability Issues

Educational advisor:

Ajsa HADZIBEGOVIC, Consultant