

Magazine to the rights of persons with disabilities

ON LINE

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Interview with Sami Kurteshi, Kosovo Ombudsman

Between the real legal framework and bitter Kosovo reality

Mr. Kurteshi how are the persons with disabilities legally protected?

Regardless that legal framework exists in Republic of Kosovo for the people with disabilities and despite the actions that have been taken from the state institutions, this category is in a very difficult situation and their integration is very insufficient.

The Constitution of Republic of Kosovo, especially the Law against discrimination guarantees all citizens including persons with disabilities equal and non-discriminatory treatment in all aspects of life. Even though that normative side is a light point, evidence shows disadvantages in the daily life are starting with the legislation especially with law acts in this field where legal norms have to be applied in practical terms.

Mister Kurteshi, are there citizen complaints and what is their nature?

On the grounds of received complaints in the Ombudsperson institution, unfortunately it had been determined that implementation of legal framework for persons with disabilities is completely unsatisfactory, inadequate and discriminatory. This reflects in all spheres of life.

Even though that freedom of movement for the persons with disabilities has been guaranteed, it has not been applied. Except some public special schools for some small categories, where the basic conditions have been provided, infrastructure in Kosovo schools is inappropriate. Unfortunately we have many illiterate people as a result of this, and we will still have a lot of them in the future.

Although the persons with disabilities are freed of payment for health services, they are forced to ensure the medicines for themselves, even though they are persons with disabilities. Most of them are unemployed, and most of them are not receiving the pension meant for persons with disabilities.

Employment sphere for people with disabilities is still left without perspective. The Kosovo government did not take necessary measures for development of special services for professional trainings.

Beside the discrimination from the side of public institutions in view of information, because of the lack of interpreters of sign language those people are discriminated also in public media, because of not providing the necessary infrastructures needed for these citizen categories.

The fact that families who are having children with invalidity do not enjoy financial support from the responsible institution is equally concerning, even though Kosovo Assembly has accepted a Law on financial support. Non-application of this law is a witness about one huge gap existing between modern legal framework and bitter Kosovo reality, even in the view of budget insufficiency.

Mr. Kurteshi, how can this situation be improved?

Today, this is a duty of all institutions in the Republic of Kosovo, especially Kosovo Government, to get seriously engaged in implementation of adopted laws. That is an obligation of the institution towards citizens of the Republic of Kosovo. On the other hand, Ombudsperson institution in the framework of its scope and constitutional and legal authorities won't stop to seek out for those rights to be respected and implemented in every-day life.



"ACCESS FOR ALL"

Celebration of DMD

IN MEMORIAM

NEW LAW

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO 2009-2011

Pristina/Prishtina 23 may 2009-05-16



The Government of Kosovo adopted a National Action Plan for people with disabilities 2009-2010, and this process has been led by Office of the Prime Minister/Office for good governance, human rights and equal opportunities in cooperation with appropriate institutions, who are operating at central and local level, international experts and different non-governmental organizations that are representing people with disabilities.

With the purpose of better information of public the conference to promote this plan was organized, the first document showing what has to be done by the institutions and the society in order to improve the quality of the life of the people with limited abilities in Republic of Kosovo.

Photo exhibit We are here! Equal conditions for all!

With this aim photo exhibit was opened the same day where the work and success of various organizations who are dealing with people with disabilities with the purpose to present this category of the citizens in creative framework and creation of better picture that presents them. The exhibit was organized in the National Theatre in Pristina/Prishtina. This event was supported by Italian Cooperation/Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



The work analyses

On December 2 2009 a workshop was organized in Pristina/Prishtina with the aim to make an analyses of the main achievements in the implementation of the National Plan for persons with disabilities and to determine the remaining challenges and at the same time to think out in which way to set up a programme and project for the work plan of 2010.



POST MORTUM Halit Ferizi Died on 05 May 2009



The leader of NGO Hendikos Mr. Halit Ferizi passed away after suffering disease. He was 60-years-old. He was very well-known leader, humanist and fighter for the rights of persons with disabilities and he gave huge contribution on improving the situation of those citizens in Kosovo society. His work as well as himself are the witnesses that person with

disabilities can be productive and useful in society alongside and equal with others.

The loss of Mr. Halit Ferizi has touched all of us, because we lost a friend, co-worker and a colleague who was always ready to get engaged for better life of all Kosovo citizens.

Dear readers,

I would like to wish you a Happy New Year and to thank the donors for support in publishing this New Year edition of our magazine.



We are together again after a longer period of time, and you can read our magazine in 6 languages on our webpage: www.lpkosova.com

I would like to use this opportunity and tell you one old story:

The one water bearer had two big water pitchers hooked on a stick that he was carrying on his shoulders. One of the pitchers was damaged, and the other one was proper. All the way towards home the water was coming out from the damaged pitcher.

The proper pitcher was proud with its work because the bearer was bring home much more water than in the damaged one, and because of it the damaged pitcher was very ashamed.

One day the damaged pitched said to the bearer: "I am ashamed because I cannot serve you the way I'm meant to."

The bearer told her: have you noticed that flowers bloom only on your side of the road, but not on the side of the road of the proper pitcher? Just because I knew about your disadvantage I had planted the flowers on your side of the road. You were watering those flowers every day. For two years now I am picking those magical flowers and they are bringing me joy. If you weren't what you are, those flowers wouldn't make me happy every day.

Message:

All of us, we have our own special disadvantage. Somehow all of us are a damaged pitcher, but those disadvantages are making our life interesting and valuable. We need support of family and society in order to make flowers bloom in the most beautiful way on our side of the road.

We should accept ourselves in the way we are and we should look with joy for the positive characteristics of our families, friends and colleagues.

You will find out that everybody is carrying something valuable inside.

Sincerely Yours,

Hilmnijeta Apuk.

ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES WITH THE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Based on the Law on Material Support for Families of Children with Permanent Disabilities (03/L-22 dated 16 May 2008) the children with permanent disabilities are entitled to receive monthly compensation of 100 Euros until they turn 18-years-old, and after they acquire the right for invalid pension.

Information about required documentation for the realization of rights on the basis of the above Act can be obtained in the offices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare throughout Kosovo.

NEW LAW EVERY FIFTY WORKER WITH DISABILITY

Law on Vocational Ability, Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities was adopted (03/L-019 dated 18.12.2008). According to this law the employers are obliged to employ one employee with limited abilities among 50 employees, but it is necessary to adopt an Administrative Direction and other acts in order to implement this law in the practice.

The implementation of this law has to be a priority for Kosovo Government and other institutions, because the implementation of the abovementioned law helps to decrease the poverty among the people with disabilities and it has a direct impact on Kosovo's economical development.

THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF LEAD IN MEDICAL HISTORY



In the past decade around 200 Roma, Ashkalies and Egyptian families along with their children have been displaced in try camps Osterode, Cesmin Lug and Kablar in northern part of Mitrovica. Those camps are based immediately near dumpsites where tones of lead junk and other heavy metals that are very danger for the health of children and adults can be found. The lives of children and adults in these lead-poisoned camps resulted in the highest level of blood lead ever recorded in the history of medicine and this level has surpassed the maximum level which can be measured by the instruments of World Health Organization WHO. Such high level of blood lead often causes heavy lth problems and very often causes their death.



Elizabeta Bajrami

hea

"In those camps children are born with high percentage of the lead and other heavy metals in their blood that cause permanent mental and physical damages. Because of this our children need urgent medical treatment and urgent medical evacuation from those lead-poisoned camps. High level of blood lead is oft"en a cause of death-said the Elizabet Bajrami leader of the NGO Roma Women for Roma Women.

Pristina/Prishtina 3 December 2009

The Office of the Prime Minister of Republic of Kosovo-Office of Good Governance organized a conference on the occasion of celebration of 3 December – International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The aim of this conference was to promote the work of Government of Republic of Kosovo in the field of limited abilities as well as encouraging the engagement in support of dignity establishment, rights and welfare for the persons with limited abilities in Republic of Kosovo.



During the conference speeches were delivered by: Michael L.Giffoni - Italian Ambassador in Republic of Kosovo, Habit Hajredini – Director of the Office for good governance, Antonio Organtini – Italian Cooperation, Bujar Kadriu – representative of “Persons with disabilities” Coalition and Afrim Maliqi from NGO Hendikos who had promoted a book “Do you know how” – Limited abilities and human rights issues.

Exhibition of authentic culture of persons with disabilities

As a part of the Conference of International Day of Persons with Disabilities NGO Little People of Kosova organized exhibition of authentic culture of persons with disabilities.

“We refuse any longer to hide our differences. Rather, we will explore, develop and celebrate our diversity by our authentic culture of persons with disabilities and offer its lessons to the world” - said Ms. Apuk.



INTERNETIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Pristina/Prishtina 10 December 2009

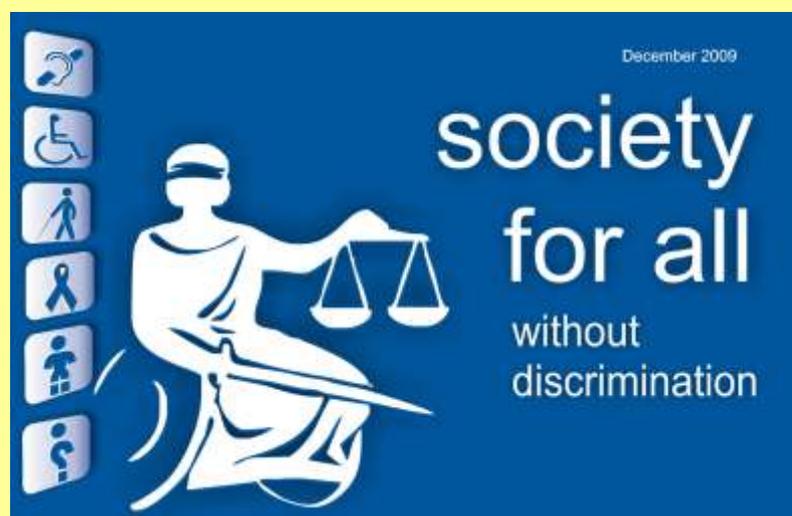
The Office of the Prime Minister of Republic of Kosovo, Office of Good Governance organized a meeting on the occasion of December 10 International Human Rights Day, and on this day it was one year since the Government of Republic of Kosovo adopted the Strategy and Action plan on Human Rights in Republic of Kosovo (2009-2011)



During this meeting Mrs. Sadeta Demaj from the Office of Good Governance comprehensively introduced the first report on implementation of strategy and action plan on human rights, where beside other topics the position of persons with disabilities was included.

Children celebrated the Human rights day

NGO Handicap Kosovo has organized a traditional event where the children with disabilities took participation and in such way children had celebrated the Human Rights Day. The event was opened by Mr. Habit Hajredini, Director of the Office of Good Governance/Office of the Prime Minister.



DR. SHYQYRI HAXHA, PERSON OF THE YEAR

Pristina/Prishtina 3 december 2009

Executive Director of the Post and Telecommunication of Kosovo-PTK Dr. Shyqyri Haxha received recognition for the most humane person of the year. It is a prize „Hadži Leti”, given by the Association of the Blind and visually impaired in Kosovo.

During the time of accepting a prize Bujar Kadriu, the president of Association of the Blind and visually impaired in Kosovo noted that Post and Telecommunication of Kosovo - PTK managed by Dr. Haxha did much more than any other institution in the field of training delivering, employment and solidarity promotion for persons with disabilities in Republic of Kosovo.

Dr. Haxha has opened the door by employing a certain number of persons with disabilities and he made our families with that are in poor social and physical condition very happy” said Bujar Kadriu.



The executive director of PTK Dr. Shyqyri Haxha added that from the numerous awards, this recognition represents special privilege for him, and it has its value, and he invited other companies and institution to meet the needs of this people category in Kosovo.

MINI OLYMPICS

Traditional two-day sports' event was organized to persons with disabilities that were held on 26-27 September 2009 in Police School in Vucitrn/Vushtri. NGO OPFAKOS organized this event.

At this sports event 573 persons and parents of the children with disabilities were present. 163 persons competed in eight different disciplines: handball, basketball, darts, ring ball for blind, run for blind, run in wheelchair, chess and unlimited children games. Individuals received cups and medals for team and individual competitions.

The donors of this sports event were Police school in Vucitrn/Vushtri and Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport.



"Mini Olympics have significant importance because it is providing a possibility for the children with disabilities for equal access in the games and recreational and sports activities"- said the Aziz Nishori from NGO OPFAKOS.

ACCESS FOR ALL

The Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning approved an Administrative Instruction for Construction Buildings Technical Terms of Accessibility to Disabled Persons

In order to introduce above mentioned Administrative Direction to the local authorities, non-governmental organizations and media, the NGO Handicap Kosovo in cooperation with the Ministry of environment and spatial planning held meetings in eight towns Kosovo wide.



FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER



The USA Embassy in Pristina/Prishtina in cooperation with USAID, Ministry of Health, Kosovo National Institute for Health Protection, Ministry of Communication and Telecommunication, Telemedicine Center/University Hospital Pristina/Prishtina, NGO JETA/VITA and other NGOs and individuals started the initiative on Kosovo and Balkan level in order to raise awareness about the breast cancer problem in Kosovo and Balkan region with the intention to decrease taboo culture, and encourage early discovering in order to avoid the risk. The cancer doesn't know the borders, nationality and religion. The goal of BBCI is a women unity against the breast cancer. In Balkan initiative against the breast cancer the women with disabilities are actively included, but very often they don't have necessary conditions to access health preventives and decrease the breast cancer risk.



NGO JETA/VITA, their team with Dijana Toska are giving an active contribution within the Balkan initiative against breast cancer and they implemented many activities, and one of those activities is group walk in downtown Pristina/Prishtina and other towns Kosovo wide, two conferences and several consulting meetings where several eminent experts participated as well as very well knows persons who managed to fight breast cancer.

Radio talk show "Voice of Common Sense"

NGO Handicap Kosovo is organizing a talk show "Voice of Common Sense" in order to raise awareness among public towards persons with disabilities through different topics and their society inclusion. You can listen to this talk show every Friday from 17:00 – 17:30. on Blue Sky radio on 97.7 MHz.



PEOPLE CAN BE DIFFERENT BUT THEY NEED TO HAVE AN EQUAL CONDITIONS

On the occasion of DMD, Day of equal professional opportunities for people with disabilities.

Pristina/Prishtina 21 October 2009.

The Government organized a Conference on the occasion of International day of equal professional possibilities for persons with disabilities known as a Disability Mentoring Day - DMD.

This idea arose in USA, and since 1999 this day had been organized in various countries all over the world with the goal to promote employment of persons with disabilities, students or applicants for several days in the field that supports their interest because of development of their interests for future employment. The benefits that arise from this initiative are doubled because students and job applicants have an opportunity to directly and practically learn and study in a real working place, to develop long term consulting relations and improve professional skills. From the other side, the employer has an opportunity to get new access to a new source of job applicants, to find interns and work prospects for long- and short-term employment and to better understand professional potential of people with disabilities. That would be the reasons why the Office of the Prime Minister/Office for the Good Governance decided to join many countries all over the world in celebration of this day, and enable in some Ministries the engagement in different jobs of students or job applicants with disabilities for a day of two.

The celebration of this day was financially supported by OSCE Mission in Kosovo.



Kosovo Mental Disability Rights Initiative



HIGHER PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES IN KOSOVO SOCIETY

NGO Kosovo Mental Disability Rights Initiatives, K- MDRI, (<http://www.mdri.org/kmdri.html>) is dealing with improvement of position of persons with mental disabilities and their higher participation in Kosovo society. Their work is financially supported by European Union and USAID.

During October 2009 K-MDRI helped out with employment of 45 persons with mental disabilities: 18 from Pristina, 6 from Elez Han, 5 from Kacanik, 8 from Hamenica, 5 from Pec/Peja and 3 from Special institution in Stimje/Shtimje. They had an opportunity to receive job training in two incoming months during which they were receiving salaries under the UNDP project for assistance for persons with disabilities as a component of Programme for active marker labour.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE DEAF

Pristina/Prishtina 29 September 2009

On the occasion of International Day of the Deaf in the Government Building a conference was held.



Office for Good Governance in cooperation in Kosovo Association of the Deaf had organized activities in order to mark this week, and in order to inform the public and raise the awareness and education of key factors in decision-making process for this category, status improvement of national sign language, improvement of education of deaf people and improvement of the access to the public information and services.

WHITE CANE WEEK 15 – 22 October 2009

Association of the Blind and visually impaired organized a defile in downtown Pristina/Prishtina during the week of the white cane and they held an academy in the Pristina/Prishtina municipal building where representatives from the Prime Minister Office, different ministries and Municipal Blind associations Kosovo wide were present.



MILLENNIUM GOALS

Pristina/Prishtina 2 October 2009

Assembly of Republic of Kosovo in cooperation with UNDP/UNKT had organized two days conference on "Social inclusion" Direction in the right way 'MDGs in Kosovo' with the goal to discuss progress and promotion of higher social inclusion in Kosovo.

During the discussion NGO Little People of Kosovo requested a higher attention from the society towards persons with disabilities and higher inclusion of their needs in Millennium Development Goals in Kosovo, because this group of citizens represents the poorest part of society in Kosovo that needs bigger support in their education, health security and reduce rate of mortality, increase employment and social assistance to persons with disabilities.



PRIZREN MUNICIPALITY

October DMD, Month of Professional Possibilities

Municipality of Prizren and the deputy mayor Mr. Camil Kurtisi and Drita Vukshinaj from NGO Hendikos from Prizren in cooperation with OSCE and NGOs that are a part of Municipal Committee for person with disabilities issues successfully managed to organize numerous activities during the traditional campaign October DMD, Month of Professional Possibilities. We would like to note the media conference where the employment campaign was launched regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, where they got a chance to get employment during one or more days in public or private sector during the whole month, competition among the people in wheelchairs, photo exhibit, seminar where the national plan for persons with disabilities was presented, action with Traffic Police in regarding with marking the parking spots for persons with disabilities, basketball tournaments for wheelchairs users. Miradije Berisha from Handikos in Prizren got a permanent employment contract...

At the end the workshop was organized in order to bring recommendations in relation with improvement of the situation of persons with disabilities in Prizren municipality such as: part-time working, incensement of employment rate, building of infrastructure with access for wheelchairs, one interpreter for deaf-mute patients in the Center for Family Medicine in Prizren, tax-exempt for owners of private companies if they are the persons with disabilities.



Qemail Kurtishi,
Deputy of Mayor in Municipality in Prizren



NGO Hendifer Urosevac/Ferizaj



ACTIVITIES Repair and production

Program of production of the Ortopedia-Hendifer workshop from Urosevac/Ferizaj is the only workshop in Kosovo and it is special because it is repairing and producing the wheelchairs, mobile ramps and others orthopedic equipments according to specific needs and person's requests with difficulties while walking and persons who are using wheelchairs. "I would like to use this opportunity and call the attention to not throw the old wheelchairs but to bring them to our workshop in order to repair them" suggested Fazlija Bungu the manager of the workshop Ortopedia-Hendifer from Urosevac/Ferizaj.

As a workshop we need an urgent support from the Ministry of Health, because it is under the competences of this Ministry to ensure orthopedic equipment for persons with disabilities.

Human rights

NGO Hendifer in Urosevac/Ferizaj is actively giving its contribution in informative campaigns about public opinion regarding the issues on persons with disabilities in multi-ethnic Voluntary Promotion Program DMD (Disability Mentoring Days)

Against exclusion

NGO Hendifer in Urosevac/Ferizaj is providing voluntary services for the persons with disabilities, primarily for single people who can not walk at all in cooperation with the Medical School and Center for Family medicine in Urosevac/Ferizaj.

During 2009 NGO Hendifer had organized two recreational picnics in nature for 150 persons with disabilities, who got a chance to spend a day by being included in sports activities.

Celebration of New Years Holidays

NGO Handifer delivered presents for 200 children with disabilities and made them happy, and on that occasion children organized the appropriate show/performance.

SPECIAL SERVICES International Airport of Prishtina/Prishtina

Prishtina/Prishtina 3 October 2009

A ceremony was held where a special bus with an elevator, designed for passengers who are using wheelchair while walking, children and adults who are requiring special attention from the moment of verification of their plain ticket until the moment when they enter the airplane, was launched. International Airport in Prishtina/Prishtine by the engaging a special elevator makes possible an equal approach for all passengers in transportation by air without discrimination, and in this way the conditions of their freedom of movement have been created.



NGO Down Syndrome Kosova – DSK



NGO DSK was established on March 4 2007, by the parents and the persons with Down syndrome.

This organization is very active and is fighting to include in society children and adults who are suffering from this syndrome.

More information about their activities can be found on their website:
www.downsyndromekosova.org

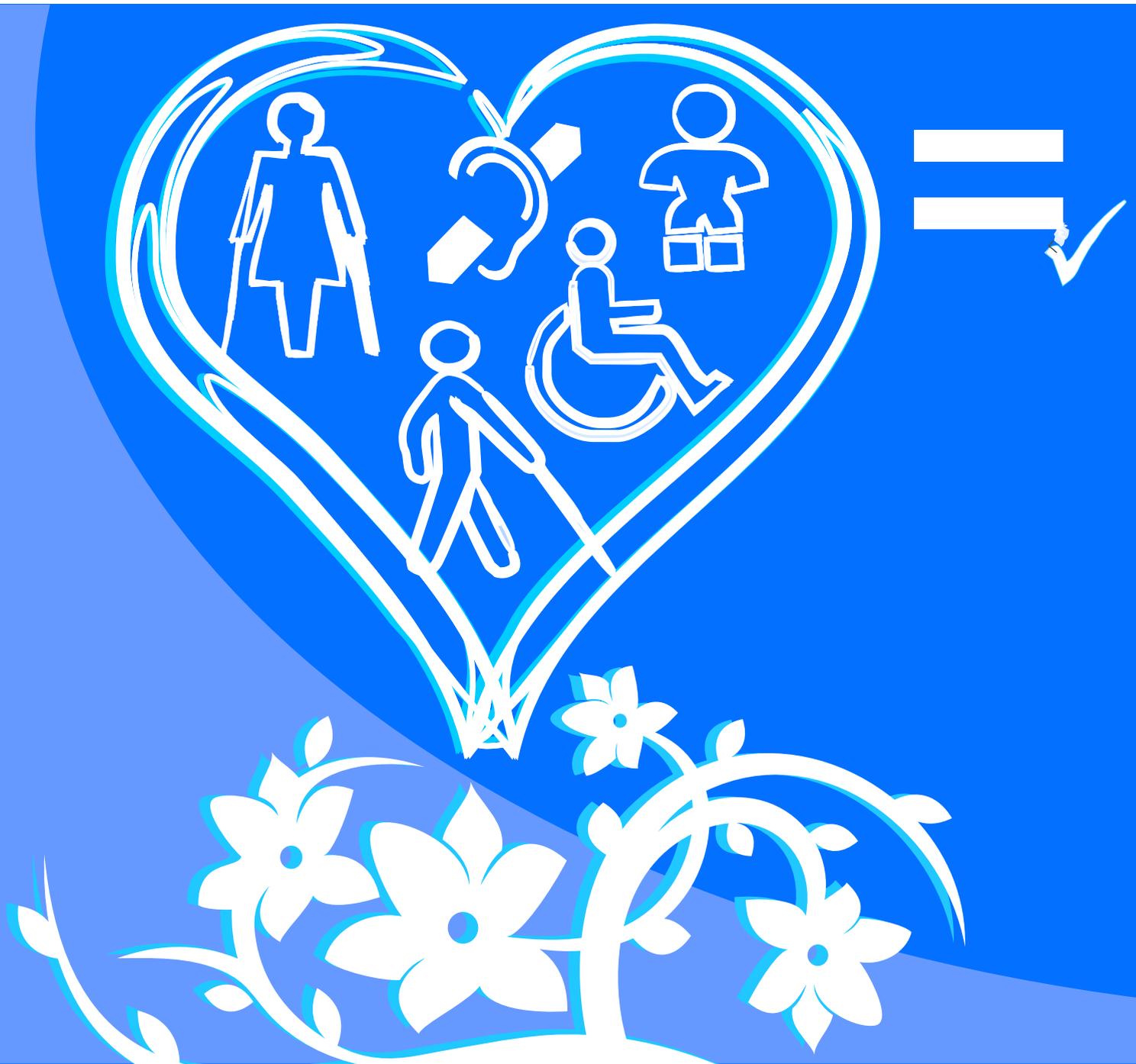
Or contact through Tel/ fax: 038 545715; 044 112170; 044 185685; or
E-mail: info@downsyndromekosova.org, Address: Rr. Kroi i Bardh Nr, 72, Dardania, 10000 Prishtina.



TALENTS WITH DISABILITIES www.webbytalents.com

We are informing talented persons with disabilities to introduce themselves though the new web-page www.webbytalents.com where they can apply with their submissions.

This website is a good platform where talented persons with disabilities can display their possibilities, develop authentic culture of persons with disabilities and create one world that is better for all.



Autor: Hiljmnijeta Apuk,



2010



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