**Independent Living in Europe and beyond: past, present, and future**

*Plan for a session at the NNDR 2023 conference in Reykjavik, Iceland*

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| **Title** | **Content** | **Time** | **Presenter** |
| Introduction to the International Journal of Disability and Social Justice (IJDSJ) | Prof Angharad Beckett, the Founding Editor and Chair of Editorial Executive of the IJDSJ will introduce the journal and its mission, as they relate to independent living.**Abstract**The International Journal of Disability and Social Justice (IJDSJ: <https://ijdsj.online/editors/aboutus/>) is an international and interdisciplinary journal in the field of Disability Studies. It publishes cutting-edge scholarship and research by authors concerned with challenging injustices relating to disability and building inclusive societies. | 5 min | Prof Angharad Becket (Professor of Political Sociology and Social Inclusion, University of Leeds, UK) |
| Introduction to the IJDSJ special issue on ‘Independent Living in Europe and beyond: past, present, and future’ | Dr Teodor Mladenov and Kamil Goungor will introduce the special issue, based on the editorial introduction.**Abstract**The Special Issue of the *International Journal of Disability and Social Justice* focusing on ‘Independent Living in Europe and beyond: past, present, and future’ marks the 50th anniversary of the first Centre for Independent Living, as well as the 10th occurrence of the Freedom Drive, a biennial advocacy event organised by the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL). In our editorial introduction, we first explain the significance of these two initiatives, tracing their history and rationale in terms of disabled people’s struggle for self-determination. We then discuss the meaning of Independent Living and associated definitional struggles. In the main part of the article, we explore the relations between Independent Living and the state, the market, and the family. This helps us to understand Independent Living as critique of professional power, self-sufficiency, and parental authority. The practical implications of these critiques are explored by looking at current struggles for deinstitutionalisation and personal assistance. We conclude by presenting the pillars of Independent Living and their consideration in the contributions to this Special Issue. | 5 min | Dr Teodor Mladenov (Senior Lecturer, University of Dundee, UK) and Kamil Goungor (Policy and Movement Support Officer, European Network on Independent Living / ENIL) |
| ‘When legislation is not enough: the adverse environment for independent living in Hungary’ – presentation of a contribution to the special issue | Dr Gabor Petri will present a co-authored contribution to the special issue.**Abstract**The history of disability policies in Hungary is one of legal progress since the 1990s and EU-funded investments since 2004, yet mixed outcomes for disabled people. To date this paradox remains unexplored, especially how it plays out in the lived experiences of disabled people and their families. This paper aims to fill this knowledge-gap by exploring disabled people’s experiences of independent living over the past three decades in Hungary. Based upon 53 life course interviews – 34 with disabled people and 19 with family members – we identify seven barriers to independent living in Hungary, which create an adverse environment. We also highlight a number of facilitators that help people to overcome or mitigate this adverse environment. In the conclusion, we discuss trends in Hungarian disability policies that impact opportunities for independent living. Results suggest decades of human-rights inspired legal progress has made little difference in people’s lived realities. | 5 min | Dr Gabor Petri (TÁRKI Research Institute, Budapest, Hungary) |
| Screening of a video on independent living | Screening of a video compilation (subtitled) of the highlights of the interviews with independent living activists included in the special issue.**Abstract**The video contains highlights from 12 interviews with independent living activists, conducted in the second half of 2022 by ENIL staff members. We interviewed Adolf Ratzka from Sweden, Antonia Trikalioti from Greece, César Giménez from Spain, Diogo Martins from Portugal, Elena Pečarič and Klaudija Poropat from Slovenia, James Cawley from Ireland, John Evans from the UK, Milica Mima Ružičić-Novković from Serbia, Nicolas Joncour from France, Suvad Zahirović from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vanya Pandieva from Bulgaria, and Vibeke Marøy Melstrøm from Norway. In the interviews, the activists reflect on the impact of Independent Living on their lives. They highlight their advocacy achievements and challenges, and identify their allies and enemies along the way. They also explore current barriers to Independent Living in their countries, making links to the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, Euroscepticism and the cost-of-living crisis. Thinking about the future, the activists discuss Independent Living strategies at local, national, and international levels. | 40 min | Dr Teodor Mladenov (Senior Lecturer, University of Dundee, UK) |
| Response/comment by representatives of the Independent Living movement in Iceland | Representatives of the Independent Living Centre in Iceland (NPA miðstöðin), in collaboration with Prof Rannveig Traustadóttir, will provide a comment on the special issue and independent living in Iceland. | 10 min | Erna Eiríksdóttir (IL Specialist, Independent Living Centre in Iceland / NPA miðstöðin) and Prof Rannveig Traustadóttir (Professor Emerita, University of Iceland, Iceland) |
| Q&A | The audience will be provided with a chance to ask questions and make comments. | 15 min | Dr Teodor Mladenov (Senior Lecturer, University of Dundee, UK) |
| **total duration of the session:** | **80 min** |