

# Zero Project Report 2012

## Summary

- Realisation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

A Convention of the United Nations (UN) is like a contract between many different countries.

For this report 35 countries, 2 states in the USA and 9 Austrian provinces have been reviewed.

- In this report you will find 27 examples of good practice.

These examples of good practice show how to improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

The examples come from 15 countries.

Experts on persons with disabilities chose these examples.

- In this report you will find 8 examples on how to make laws which are good for persons with disabilities.

These good examples come from 7 countries.

Experts on persons with disabilities chose these examples.

# Summary

For many years the Essl family have carried out social activities, especially for persons with disabilities.

In 2007 Martin and Gerda Essl founded the Essl Foundation.

The Essl Foundation takes care of all the social activities of the Essl family.

## **Here are some of the social activities of the Essl Foundation:**

- Since 2008 the Essl Foundation has awarded a **prize** to a very good businesswoman or businessman from the social sector.

The winner of the prize gets 1 million Euros for a new social project.

- **The Zero Project**

The Essl Foundation carries out this project.

The Zero Project is a new way of working for the rights of persons with disabilities all over the world.

The goal is a world with zero barriers.

The basis for this project is the Zero Project Report.

The report is a list of information.

It shows the situation of persons with disabilities in different countries.

This report helps to improve the rights of persons with disabilities.

Every year or every 2 years there will be a new report.

## **Social questions and positive examples of projects and laws**

The Zero Project is split up into 3 areas of work.

All 3 areas of work help to improve the situation of persons with disabilities.

### **1. Questionnaire**

The Zero Project reviews how the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is realised in different countries.

The project asks social questions.

For example, if persons with disabilities can easily take the bus.

Or if they have easy access to public buildings, like a supermarket or a government agency.

There are other projects that check how the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is realised in different countries.

The Zero Project wants to help these other projects.

The work of the Zero Project helps all persons who are working for the realisation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

It helps because the results show exactly what has to be done for persons with disabilities.

The review was done with a questionnaire.

The questionnaire asks 21 social questions.

Many experts in 36 countries all over the world and in all Austrian provinces answered the questionnaire.

## **2. Good examples**

Here you will find some good examples of how the situation of persons with disabilities can be improved.

The examples show effective solutions for many problems that affect persons with disabilities.

Therefore these examples have become a very important part of the Zero Project.

You can find 27 of these good examples in this report.

On the Internet you can find even more good examples.

Experts chose these examples very carefully.

## **3. Positive laws**

In this report you will find 8 laws that have improved the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Zero Project worked together with law experts.

These experts study new laws that will solve problems in the future.

These experts checked and reviewed laws for persons with disabilities.

They then selected 8 laws, which can be found in this report.

## **Report, website and conference**

The Zero Project uses 3 important ways to inform as many persons as possible about the work of the project.

### **1. Report**

The Zero Project Report was published on the 3rd of December 2011.

In this report you will find all the results of the Zero Project.

You can get the report printed on paper and also for free download from the Zero Project Website:

[www.zeroproject.org](http://www.zeroproject.org)

In the future the report will be published every year or every 2 years.

### **2. Website**

In January 2012, the website of the Zero Project will be accessible to everybody.

The address is [www.zeroproject.org](http://www.zeroproject.org)

At first the website will mostly show good examples of how the situation of persons with disabilities can be improved.

The website will also present positive laws that have improved the rights of persons with disabilities.

In the future the website will be a place for communication, where people can exchange information.

Everybody who is interested in working with persons with disabilities can use this website.

### **3. Conference**

On the 22nd and 23rd of January the Zero Project Conference takes place in Vienna.

The conference will present 8 positive laws that improve the rights of persons with disabilities.

A lot of experts for the rights of persons with disabilities will be at this conference.

These experts come from different countries all over the world.

They will talk about these positive laws.

We want to thank the Bank Austria for the facilities of the conference, and for their generous overall support of the conference.

## **Social questions: Results**

For this report 21 social questions were answered.

To make clear what is good or bad, the results are marked with the colours of a traffic light.

- “Red” means the solution is bad.
- “Yellow” means the solution is partly good.
- “Green” means the solution is good.

The questionnaire checks whether or not the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been realised.

The reason for checking is that more than 100 countries have confirmed this UN Convention.

The demands of the UN Convention are part of the law in these countries.

This means that they must be realised.

The check was from May to September 2011.

35 countries were checked.

In the years 2013 and 2014 even more countries should be checked.

It is difficult to compare the different countries because, for example, the laws for persons with disabilities are different in every country.

Furthermore the word “disability” doesn’t mean the same in every country.

And whether a country accepts you as a person with disabilities or not is not the same in every country.

## Results

The best results of the questionnaire come first.

You can also see the original number of the question.

### 1. Question:

Are new buildings accessible to persons with disabilities?

Green: 27 countries

Yellow: 8 countries

Red: No country

### 6. Question:

Is there sign language in court for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired?

Green: 24 countries

Yellow: 9 countries

Red: 2 countries

### 10. Question:

Is it possible for children with disabilities to attend standard lessons in primary school?

Green: 22 countries

Yellow: 12 countries

Red: 1 country

**5. Question:**

Is there partial guardianship?

Partial guardianship supports persons with disabilities in their everyday life and makes some decisions for them.

But they can make their own decisions as well.

Green: 20 countries

Yellow: 9 countries

Red: 5 countries

**14. Question:**

Are workplaces adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities?

Green: 19 countries

Yellow: 13 countries

Red: 3 countries

**9. Question:**

Do persons with disabilities have the right to marry?

Do persons with disabilities have the right to have and raise children?

Green: 16 countries

Yellow: 17 countries

Red: 2 countries

**20. Question:**

Is there an organisation which takes care of all representations of persons with disabilities?

Green: 16 countries

Yellow: 12 countries

Red: 7 countries

**19. Question:**

Are there statistics about education and work for persons with disabilities?

Green: 13 countries

Yellow: 14 countries

Red: 8 countries

**8. Question:**

Are institutions for persons with disabilities checked regularly?

Green: 12 countries

Yellow: 15 countries

Red: 7 countries

**11. Question:**

Are there fair exams for students with disabilities?

Green: 12 countries

Yellow: 20 countries

Red: 3 countries

**13. Question:**

Is medical support accessible for persons with disabilities?

Green: 11 countries

Yellow: 20 countries

Red: 4 countries

**17. Question:**

Do persons with disabilities get the necessary support to vote in secret?

Green: 11 countries

Yellow: 23 countries

Red: 1 country

**21. Question:**

Is there an organisation that employs persons with disabilities and that observes whether or not the UN Convention is realised?

Green: 10 countries

Yellow: 15 countries

Red: 8 countries

**2. Question:**

Does the law give a deadline as to when disabled access to buildings must be in place?

Green: 8 countries

Yellow: 20 countries

Red: 7 countries

**7. Question:**

Is there enough financial support for persons with disabilities?

Green: 7 countries

Yellow: 21 countries

Red: 7 countries

**16. Question:**

Do more persons with disabilities have a job than last year?

Green: 6 countries

Yellow: 7 countries

Red: 22 countries

**15. Question:**

Does the state employ enough persons with disabilities?

Green: 5 countries

Yellow: 20 countries

Red: 10 countries

**18. Question:**

Are there any statistics on persons with disabilities living in institutions?

Green: 5 countries

Yellow: 23 countries

Red: 7 countries

**3. Question:**

Are the public buses in the capital city accessible for persons with disabilities?

Green: 3 countries

Yellow: 30 countries

Red: 2 countries

#### **4. Question:**

Is there an early warning system for persons with disabilities if there is an emergency in the country, for example if there is a flood?

Green: 3 countries

Yellow: 11 countries

Red: 19 countries

#### **12. Question:**

Are there statistics on the number of persons with disabilities who studied at university?

Green: 3 countries

Yellow: 17 countries

Red: 15 countries

### **The most important results of the social questions:**

#### **Question 17:**

**Do persons with disabilities get the necessary support to vote in secret?**

In 23 of 35 countries persons with disabilities don't get the necessary support to vote in secret.

In some of the countries real elections have only existed for a short time.

But in most countries real elections have been held for a long time.

In these countries the support to vote for persons with disabilities should be standard.

**Question 4:**

**Is there an early warning system for persons with disabilities if there is an emergency in the country?**

Emergency warnings are accessible for all persons with disabilities in only 3 countries.

These countries are:

Denmark, the Netherlands and Great Britain.

In 19 countries there are no warnings that are accessible for all persons with disabilities.

Because there are 3 countries that have warnings for persons with disabilities, we know that it is possible.

Therefore it shouldn't be a problem for all countries to have accessible warnings for persons with disabilities.

**Question 3:**

**Are the public buses in the capital city accessible for persons with disabilities?**

There are only 3 countries and one state in the USA where public buses are accessible for persons with disabilities.

These are:

Israel, the Netherlands, Great Britain and the state of California in the USA.

From these countries only Great Britain has confirmed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In all other countries or Austrian provinces public buses are not accessible for all persons with disabilities.

Buses are very important for persons with disabilities because most of them are not able to use other means of transportation without help.

If persons with disabilities can't use buses it has bad consequences for them.

For example, it is difficult to get to work or school.

They have problems in their free time as well, because they are not able to travel freely.

**Question 15:**

**Does the state employ enough persons with disabilities?**

Only 5 countries can tell us how many persons with disabilities the state employs directly.

In more than 20 countries these statistics don't exist or they don't count them every year.

This is a bad sign, because it is easy and cheap to find out how many persons with disabilities the state employs directly.

**Question 12:**

**Are there statistics on the number of persons with disabilities who studied at university?**

The results for this question are very bad.

In 15 countries there are no statistics on how many persons with disabilities studied at university.

In 17 countries only few or bad statistics exist on the number of persons with disabilities who studied at university.

This is hard to understand.

Most universities are paid for by the state.

This means that the state could easily tell the universities to count properly how many persons with disabilities studied.

**Question 1:****Are new buildings accessible for persons with disabilities?**

The results of this question are very good.

In most countries new buildings must be accessible for persons with disabilities.

This includes all kinds of disabilities.

Every country takes this seriously.

But it is difficult to make buildings accessible for all kinds of disabilities.

Therefore it would be good if all countries were working together.

They could learn from each other.

**Question 5:****Is there partial guardianship?**

In the past many persons with disabilities couldn't make their own decisions.

Other people made all their decisions for them.

Partial guardianship supports persons with disabilities in their everyday life.

But they can make their own decisions as well.

In 20 countries persons with disabilities have the right to partial guardianship.

In 9 countries this right only exists partly.

This fits with the demands of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Persons with disabilities must have the right to take part in important decisions for their lives.

A bad example is Ireland.

In Ireland they don't have partial guardianship.

This is because of a very old law, which hasn't been changed yet.

**Question 10:**

**Is it possible for children with disabilities to attend standard lessons in primary school?**

It is very important for children with disabilities to be able to learn and play together with children without disabilities.

In many countries children with disabilities at least have the right to attend school together with children without disabilities.

That is very good.

We hope this right will soon exist in even more countries.

A very bad example is Argentina.

This country has confirmed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

But in Argentina children with disabilities still don't have the right to attend the same school as children without disabilities.

**Question 18:**

**Are there any statistics on persons with disabilities living in institutions?**

There are very few statistics on persons with disabilities living in institutions.

But how can a state take care of persons with disabilities if it is not clear how many of them live in institutions?

Good statistics only exist in 5 countries.

**Question 16:**

**Do more persons with disabilities have a job than last year?**

Many countries don't have statistics on the number of persons with disabilities who have a job.

In other countries the statistics show that fewer persons with disabilities have a job today than in the past.

This is very bad.

If there are fewer jobs for persons with disabilities the states have to find out why the situation is like this.

Then the states can do something about it.

But if there are no statistics on the job situation of persons with disabilities, nobody will do anything about it because they won't know if there is a problem or not.

**Question 14:**

**Are workplaces adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities?**

In 19 countries employers must adapt the workplaces to the needs of persons with disabilities.

This is a very good result.

In 13 countries the employers must do this to some extent.

Hopefully even more countries will insist that workplaces must be adapted for persons with disabilities.

**Question 19:**

**Are there statistics about education and work for persons with disabilities?**

Every 10 years all countries should give statistics on the opportunities for education and work for persons with disabilities.

This is more than enough time.

But the result was very bad.

8 countries don't have any statistics at all.

15 countries do have some statistics, but they are bad.

They only show either the work or education opportunities.

Some of these statistics are older than 10 years.

This means that they don't tell us how the situation is today.

If a state wants to support persons with disabilities it needs good statistics.

It is a bad sign that so few statistics exist.

One reason could be that these states don't want to support persons with disabilities. Another reason could be that the states have problems getting good statistics.

#### **Question 6:**

#### **Is there sign language in court for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired?**

More than half of the countries have accepted sign language as an official language in court.

In many countries deaf or hearing-impaired persons have the right to a translator.

The state pays for this translator.

In Albania and Ireland the situation for deaf and hearing-impaired persons is very bad.

**Question 8:**

**Are persons with disabilities in institutions free to leave or stay?**

The result of this question was very bad.

It is not enough that persons with disabilities in institutions have the right to leave or stay.

They must know about this right as well.

And they must be able to make this choice.

In almost half of the countries persons with disabilities:

- don't know that they have the right to leave or stay in an institution
- or their right to make this choice is not protected.

## **Differences between Austrian provinces**

Organisations for persons with disabilities in all 9 provinces of Austria also answered 13 questions.

The 9 Austrian provinces are Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Vienna.

Austrian provinces can decide about certain regulations and laws on their own.

For example, Austrian provinces can decide about regulations for persons with disabilities.

Therefore the regulations for persons with disabilities in Austrian provinces can be different.

### **The most important results:**

- Vienna is the only province with an organisation that observes whether or not the UN Convention is realised.  
There are big differences in the accessibility of buildings.  
Carinthia and Vorarlberg have the best results.
- Only Carinthia and Vorarlberg check that no person has to stay longer than necessary in an institution.
- There are big differences in the accessibility of medical support.
- Only Tyrol and Upper Austria have statistics on the possibilities of education and work for persons with disabilities.

## **Good examples of projects for persons with disabilities**

The Essl Foundation has united many experts from many countries. These experts selected 27 good examples of projects that help persons with disabilities.

### **1. Assistance**

- Support for families who take care of persons with disabilities.  
A professional assistant takes care of persons with disabilities so that their families can relax.
- Support for sexuality.
- Many companies have united to organise personal assistance for persons with disabilities.
- Many experts from different backgrounds have united to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.
- A “baby simulator” to help persons with disabilities to decide if they want to have a baby.
- A European organisation that supports persons with disabilities to live independently.  
The name of the organisation is ENIL.

### **2. Support at the workplace and new jobs**

- Job offers on the Internet that encourage companies to employ persons with disabilities.
- Activities in Asia to make jobs for persons with psychosocial disabilities.
- Special jobs on the computer for persons with autism.

- A training programme for blind women.  
These women learn how to check for breast cancer in other women.
- An entertainment facility that employs blind persons.  
This should help blind and non-blind persons learn to understand each other better.
- A company that helps persons with disabilities to find jobs.

### **3. Hardware, software and technical support**

- Software that makes email and web-texts more accessible for persons with disabilities.
- A system to translate conferences and discussions.  
This system makes subtitles as well.  
Subtitles help deaf persons.
- An online map of accessible and inaccessible places for wheelchairs.
- One key to open public toilets and bathrooms in Europe.

### **4. Information and realisation**

- Support for persons who help refugees with disabilities.
- Seminars and plans to show everyone how they can support the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- A plan for the local and regional realisation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **5. Television and other media**

- Subtitles for television news in South America.
- Online television for deaf and hearing impaired persons.
- A tool to check the accessibility of websites and other digital media.

## **6. Coaching, education and training**

- A training centre for persons with disabilities.  
Here they learn how to work as a coach for other persons with disabilities.
- An activity for young people.  
They explain to other people how important the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is.

## **7. International cooperation**

- Rules for development programmes to make sure that persons with disabilities can take part.
- A system for developing countries to observe the realisation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **8. Statistics**

- Information on the Internet about government projects from all over the world for persons with disabilities.  
These projects support persons with disabilities in education, health and financial matters.

## **Good examples of laws for persons with disabilities**

The Essl foundation and many experts have checked 18 laws for persons with disabilities from different countries and Austrian provinces. They checked which laws have improved the rights of persons with disabilities the most.

Then they selected the best 8 laws.

These 8 laws are split into 2 areas:

1. Anti-discrimination and equality laws
2. Special Laws

### **1. Anti-discrimination and equality laws**

There are many laws in different countries which say that every person is the same.

But these laws are very different.

Some laws are only about certain types of disability.

Other laws are about every kind of discrimination.

They say that every person has the same rights, no matter where the person comes from, or which religion she or he is.

These laws are very important for improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities.

They help persons with disabilities in different areas of their lives.

For example, in education, employment, health, transport and access to information.

The best anti-discrimination and equality laws are from Austria, Spain and Great Britain.

These laws are not perfect, but they are good examples for other countries.

## 2. Special Laws

Every country of the world has special laws and regulations to protect and help persons with disabilities.

These laws are about many important areas of life for persons with disabilities, for example accessibility or education.

5 very good laws and regulations were chosen:

- The Swedish Ombudsman system for persons with learning disabilities and psychosocial disabilities.

The Ombudsman system makes sure that certain persons aren't treated badly or unfairly.

This service is free.

The Ombudsman system employs experts for the special laws that are made for persons with disabilities.

The Swedish Ombudsman system has helped many people.

It has helped to avoid suicides, it has reduced guardianship, and it has stopped more people from feeling lonely.

In addition, the costs of care have been reduced as well.

- Because of the "Representation Agreements" in Canada, persons with disabilities have more rights to make decisions on their own.

They get the support they really need.

The Swedish right to live independently.

Persons with disabilities can choose the support they want to have.

They directly get the money for their support.

Therefore they can choose the assistance they want to have.

They have the maximum control and freedom of choice.

A law like this exists in very few countries.

- The law of education in Italy.

In Italy all nurseries, schools and universities must accept any child, pupil or student.

It doesn't matter if the person has a disability or not.

Because of this law nearly all pupils with disabilities are educated in standard schools.

- Access to justice in Israel.

In Israel all persons with learning or communication disabilities get the help they need if they are in court.