

ŽENE SA INVALIDITETOM POKRETAČICE PROMENA

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES GENERATORS OF CHANGE



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POKRETAČICE PROMENA**

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5. maj Evropski Dan samostalnog života – posvećeno Gordani Rajkov,
utemeljivačici samostalnog života u Srbiji i regionu

5th May, European Independent Living Day – Dedicated to Gordana Rajkov,
the founder of the Independent Living movement in Serbia and the region

Zašto ova tema i ove priče

Ova brošura je posvećena ženama sa invaliditetom, koje više nisu sa nama, ali će njihova zaostavština uvek biti prisutna. Ove priče su samo nekih od njih.

Ova brošura je namenjena i mladima koji dolaze, kao inspiracija i ohrabrenje da nikad ne odustanu od svojih ciljeva i da, posebno žene sa invaliditetom, ne budu skrajnute sa svog puta.

Obeležavajući 5.maj Evropski Dan samostalnog života, posvećujemo ga pre svega Gordani Rajkov, utemeljivačici samostalnog života u Srbiji ali i regionu, kao i njenim saradnicama, saputnicama i ženama sa invaliditetom regiona koje su dale svoje najbolje svom društvu, zajednici, državi ...

Mada su i muškarci i žene sa invaliditetom diskriminirani po osnovu svoje invalidnosti, ta je diskriminacija dvostruka za žene sa invaliditetom po osnovu roda i po osnovu invalidnosti. Njihova postignuća ne smeju da budu zaboravljena, jer su utrle put drugim ženama sa invaliditetom da se ostvare kao žene, majke, profesionalke u svom poslu, sportistkinje, političarke...

Ono što su dale treba da čuvamo i unapređujemo.

Hvala Im! Toliko Im dugujemo!



Why this topic and these stories?

This brochure is dedicated to women with disabilities, who are no longer with us, but their legacy will always be present. These stories are just some of them.

This brochure is also for young people, new generation, as an inspiration and encouragement to never give up on their goals and, especially women with disabilities, not to be sidetracked from their path.

We dedicate this brochure, as well as the European Independent Living Day (5th of May), to women with disabilities and to Gordana Rajkov, who was a trailblazer. All these women made outstanding contributions to their communities, their country, and the society at large.

Both men and women with disabilities are discriminated against based on their disability; however, this discrimination is doubly severe for women with disabilities because they face bias both on the grounds of their gender and their disability. Their achievements should never be forgotten as they have paved the way for other women with disabilities to thrive as women, mothers, professionals, athletes, and politicians....

We must preserve and build upon what they have achieved.

We are grateful to them! We are indebted to them!

Bosna i Hercegovina
Bosnia and Herzegovina



Elvira Bešlija

Elvira Bešlija – rođena je u Sarajevu 1953. Po zanimanju je bila pravnik i zadnjih decenija zaposlena u Savezu paraplegičara i oboljelih od dječje paralize Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine kao generalni sekretar. Od svoje 14. godine u stanju je paraplegije.

Bila je članica, sa značajnom ulogom, svih relevantnijih i reprezentativnijih asocijacija, koalicija i koordinacija osoba s invaliditetom na nivou Bosne i Hercegovine, autorica, koautorica i recenzent brojnih knjiga iz različitih oblasti invalidnosti, pokretač i glavni urednik časopisa "Paraplegija i Mi".

Uspjela je, zajedno sa svojim saradnicima, da i u toku rata 1992-1995. u Sarajevu, koje je bilo pod ratnom opsadom, sačuva rad Saveza i radila sve što se moglo raditi u tim teškim ratnim okolnostima u svrhu pomoći osobama s invaliditetom.

Elvira je bila je članica delegacije Bosne i Hercegovine za prezentaciju „Izveštaja o provođenju Konvencije UN o pravima osoba sa invaliditetom u BiH“ u Ženevi, 2017.

Može se reći bez imalo pretjerivanja, da je Elvira bila glavni reprezentant osoba s invaliditetom sa stanjem paraplegije i oboljelih od dječje paralize u svim asocijacija, koalicijama, delegacija i tijelima na svim nivoima u Bosni i Hercegovini.

Bila je istinski lider osoba s invaliditetom i njen odlazak 2021. godine nas obavezuje da je pamtimo kao izuzetno uspješnu osobu, u svakom pogledu, zahvaljujući njenoj upornosti i vrijednom, svakodnevnom radu i pozitivnoj energiji, širom Bosne i Hercegovine.



Elvira Bešlija was born in Sarajevo in 1953. She worked as a lawyer, serving as the Secretary-General for the Association of Paraplegics and Polio Patients of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for many years.

Having been paraplegic since the age of 14, Elvira played a pivotal role in the disability movement. She was an influential woman who had significant relevance in various representative associations, coalitions, and organizations for persons with disabilities at the country level in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

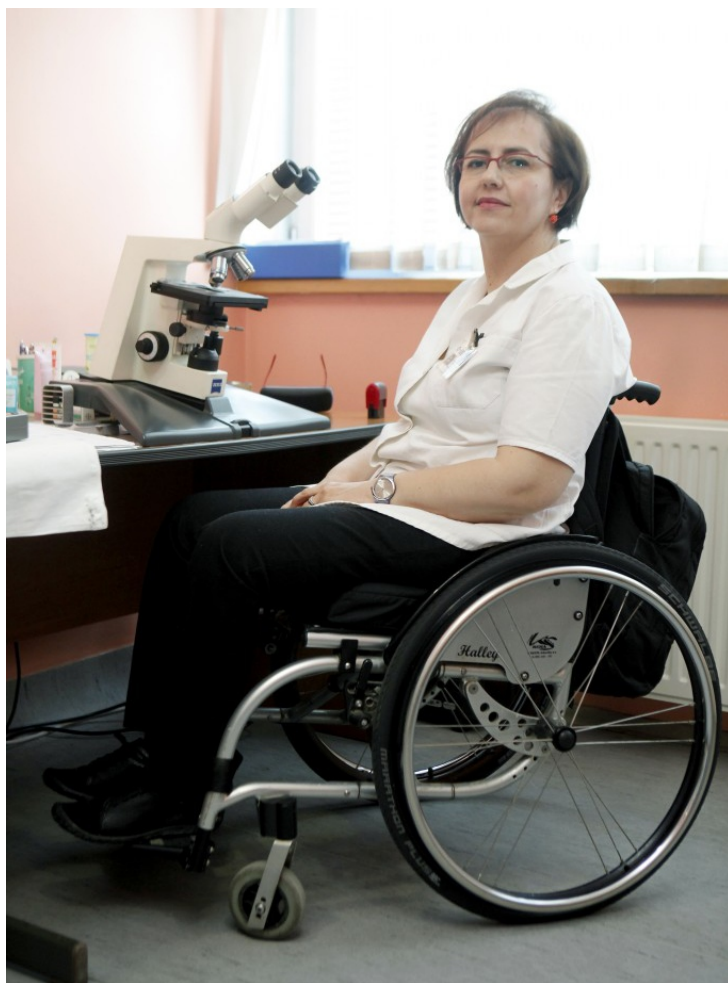
She authored, co-authored, and reviewed a notable number of books spanning various facets of disability. In addition, she served as the initiator and editor-in-chief of the "Paraplegia and We" magazine.

During the armed conflict in the 1990s, Elvira and her collaborators managed to preserve the functioning of the Alliance of Paraplegics in Sarajevo, which was under wartime siege, providing invaluable assistance to people with disabilities.

In 2017, Elvira was a member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina delegation in Geneva, where she presented the "Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in BiH."

It is no exaggeration to state that Elvira was the foremost representative of persons with paraplegia and polio across all associations, coalitions, delegations, and bodies at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Elvira was an exemplary leader for people with disabilities. Her passing in 2021 serves as a reminder of her extraordinary success, achieved through her persistence, hard work, and positive energy. She leaves an enduring legacy across Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Belma Goralija

Belma Goralija - rođena je 1968. i odrastala kao zaljubljenica u putovanja i folklor. Ali veselu djevojčicu i studenticu medicine, 1992. prekida snajperska vatra u Sarajevu, pa tešku povredu kičme sanira u Njemačkoj i Italiji, ne odustajući od života.

Italija je bila prekretnica, govorila je uvijek Belma. Uz sportsku rehabilitaciju vratila je samopouzdanje, ostvarila odlične rezultate u mačevanju i započela rad u jednoj bolnici kao sekretarica, što je dodatno učvrstilo u spoznaji da može da živi kao i svi ljudi koji nemaju invaliditet.

Po povratku kući 1997, uz dilemu kako da sada dalje gradi život, kreće u aktivizam u nevladinoj organizaciji "Centar za samopouzdanje", saradnju sa međunarodnom organizacijom Queen's University, što je vratilo ljubavi ka medicini koju diplomira 2004, a potom i specijalizira u zvanju citologa, a svoj nedovršeni radni vijek, provela je u Zavodu za zaštitu zdravlja žena i materinstva u Sarajevu.

Svojim životom bila je i ostala dostojan primjer samostalnog života i svega onog što neki samo zagovaraju. Put do samostalnosti i svog poziva ljekara Belma je trnovito gradila, uz neizmjernu podršku roditelja i porodice, snagom svoje volje i odlučnosti, vjere da treba i može biti uspješna u onom što voli, bez obzira na predrasude i obeshrabrenje koja su dolazila iz sredine.

Nakon njenog odlaska 2022. invalidski pokret Bosne i Hercegovine, nastavlja da pamti njen doprinos: ženama sa invaliditetom, mirovnim procesima, zalaganju za sprečavanje višestruke diskriminacije sa kojom se žene s invaliditetom susreću, te važnosti davanja glasa ženama s invaliditetom na različitim područjima.



Belma Goralija was born in 1968 and developed a fondness for travel and folklore during her upbringing. But in 1992, her enthusiastic spirit and successful academic journey in Medical Science were halted by sniper fire in Sarajevo.

She commenced her rehabilitation in Germany and Italy, confronting a severe spinal injury with unwavering resolve. Belma acknowledged Italy as the turning point in her life. Through sports rehabilitation, she regained self-confidence, excelled in fencing, and further bolstered her resilience by working as a secretary in a hospital. This experience reinforced her commitment to live a fulfilled life, just like all people who do not have a disability.

Upon returning home in 1997, thinking about how to continue with her new/old life, Belma turned to activism, becoming involved with the non-governmental organization "Center for Self-Confidence." Subsequent cooperation with the Queen's University resulted in her decision to rekindle her passion for medicine. Belma graduated in 2004, specialized in Cytology, and dedicated her career to the Institute for the Protection of Women's Health and Maternity in Sarajevo.

Her life stands as an inspiring testament to independent living - something many advocate for but only few achieve. Belma built her path to independence and a professional career with the immense support of her parents and other family, as well as her personal willpower and belief in her ability to succeed in doing what she loved despite societal prejudices and discouragements.

Her passing in 2022 left an indelible mark on disability activists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who continue to honor her influential contributions to women with disabilities, her role in peace processes, her advocacy in preventing the multiple discriminations faced by women with disabilities, and the importance of giving voice to such women across various areas.



Olivera Mastikosa

Olivera Mastikosa - rođena je u Sarajevu 1964, gdje je završila osnovnu školu, jezičku gimnaziju i Poljoprivredni fakultet, na kome je i magistrirala.

Prvi znaci distrofije javili su joj se tokom studija, ali to je nije spriječilo da uspješno i u roku završi osnovne studije, te da se ostvari kao majka znajući da će to ubrzati bolest. Usljed ratnih dešavanja, napušta posao u Agrokomercu i seli se u Banja Luku u Zavod za rehabilitaciju i zaposljavanje oboljelih od neuromišićnih oboljenja, gdje upoznaje svog budućeg bračnog druga Željka.

Radila je kao sekretar Saveza distrofičara RS, u International rescue committee kao službenik, te kao edukator u okviru projekta Rehabilitacija u zajednici za Queens University, Kanada. Sa suprugom i grupom prijatelja, 2001. osniva Humanitarnu organizaciju „Partner“, na čijem čelu je bila kao izvršni direktor deset godina i prva javno progovorila o životima i problemima sa kojima se bore osobe sa invaliditetom koji su dugo bili tabu.

Kroz brojne projekte i kampanje za izmjenu zakona, uklanjanje arhitektonskih barijera, te za bolje obrazovanje i zapošljavanje osoba sa invaliditetom, sa svojim saborcima je pokazala je da javni i nevladin sektor mogu i treba da rade zajedno, a zbog svog doprinosa 2009. odlikovana je plaketom Grada Banja Luka za doprinos unapređenju društvenog položaja osoba sa invaliditetom.

Olja Mastikosa je pokazala da žena sa invaliditetom može biti obrazovana, društveno aktivna, da može da radi i zasnuje porodicu, što je bilo ohrabrenje i podstrek za mnoge mlade kojima je uvijek bila okružena, što će biti upamćeno i po njenom odlasku 2021, usljed posledica od COVID-19.



Olivera Mastikosa - was born in Sarajevo in 1964. She completed her elementary and high school education, as well as her studies at the Faculty of Agriculture in her hometown, where she also earned a master's degree. The first signs of dystrophy surfaced during her studies, but this did not hinder her from successfully completing her basic studies on time. Additionally, she embraced motherhood, knowing that this would expedite her condition.

Due to war actions, she quit his job at Agrokomerc and moved to Banja Luka to the Institute for Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Neuromuscular Diseases, where she met her spouse, Zeljko. Olivera worked as the secretary of the Federation of MD of the Republic of Srpska, as an official in the International Rescue Committee, and as an educator within the Rehabilitation in the Community project for Queens University, Canada.

In 2001, together with her husband and a group of friends, Olivera founded the humanitarian organization "Partner". She served as the executive director for ten years and was the first person to publicly talk about the lives and problems of people with disabilities - topics long considered taboo. Through her commitment to numerous projects and campaigns aimed at changing relevant laws, removing architectural barriers, and improving education and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, Olivera and her colleagues demonstrated how the public and non-governmental sectors can—and should—collaborate. For her efforts in improving the social position of persons with disabilities, she was awarded a plaque by the City of Banja Luka in 2009.

Olja Mastikosa proved that a woman with disabilities can be educated, socially active, professionally successful, and have a family. Her life served as an inspiration to many young people, whose memories of her endure following her passing in 2021 due to the effects of COVID-19.

Crna Gora / Montenegro



Danijela Vušurović

Danijela Vušurović – rođena je 1983. u Herceg Novom.

Prva je žena s invaliditetom, a ujedno prva osoba s invaliditetom, koja je pokrenula postupak za zaštitu od diskriminacije zbog nepristupačnosti nekog javnog objekta - u konkretnom slučaju: Opštine Nikšić, kao javne institucije, koja je tada bila potpuno nepristupačna osobama s invaliditetom iako je zakonski bila u obavezi da ima obezbijeden nesmetan pristup za ulazak, kretanje, boravak i rad osoba smanjene pokretljivosti i osoba s invaliditetom.

Nakon toga, osnažene njenim primjerom i druge osobe s invaliditetom su počele pokretati postupke za zaštitu od diskriminacije. Bila je studentkinja psihologije.

Preminula je 2014. godine u Nikšiću, u 32. godini života od komplikacija izazvanih posljedicama mišićne distrofije.



Danijela Vusurovic – Danijela was born 1983. in Herceg Novi.

She was the first woman with a disability, who also happened to be the first person with a disability who initiated a procedure for protection against discrimination due to the inaccessibility of a public facility. This facility was the building of Niksic municipality, a public institution. At the time, it was entirely inaccessible to persons with disabilities despite a legal obligation to ensure unimpeded access for entry, movement, stay, and work for persons with reduced mobility and people with disabilities.

Inspired by her example, more people with disabilities started to initiate procedures against discrimination.

She passed away in Niksic, 2014, at the age of 32 from complications caused by muscular dystrophy.



Slobodanka (Boba) Gurešić

Slobodanka (Boba) Gurešić – Boba je rođena 1992. u Bijelom Polju.

Bila je crnogorska parastonoteniserka, osvajačica dvije medalje na univerzitetskim prvenstvima Evrope. Više puta je osvajala titulu šampionke Crne Gore.

Živjela je i studirala u Podgorici, gdje se i počela baviti stonim tenisom, i to nakon što je izmještena iz Doma za stare u Bijelom Polju, u kojem je bila smještena, sa samo 20 godina života, rješenjem Centra za socijalni rad.

Nakon što je završila srednju školu u Resursnom centru za djecu i mlade u Podgorici, obratila se Udruženju mladih sa hendikepom Crne Gore, zbog pružanja pravne pomoći za napuštanje Doma i upis na fakultet.

Boba je preminula 2024, u Podgorici od posljedica tumora koji joj je kasno ustanovljen. Napustila nas je rano, u 32. godini života.



Slobodanka (Boba) Guresic – Boba was born in Bijelo Polje 1992.

She was the Montenegrin paraathlete, a table tennis player. She won two medals at the European University Championships and was the champion of Montenegro on multiple occasions.

She moved from the Home for the Elderly in Bijelo Polje, where she had been residing since the age of 20, following a decision by the Center for Social Work. Subsequently, she relocated to Podgorica, where she lived and studied and took up table tennis.

She completed her high school education at the Resource Center for Children. The Association of Disabled Youth of Montenegro played a significant role in her life, offering her legal assistance to exit the Elderly Home and commence college education.

She passed away 2024 in Podgorica from complications of a late-diagnosed tumor. Boba was only 32 years old.



Mira Topović

Mira Topović – Mira je rođena 1972. u Pljevljima.

Diplomirala je pravo i bila dugogodišnja aktivistkinja za prava osoba sa invaliditetom. Osnivačica Udruženja paraplegičara Pljevlja. Bila je radno angažovana u Opštini Pljevlja, pokrivajući poziciju samostalne savjetnice iz oblasti boračko – invalidske zaštite, rodne ravnopravnosti i ljudskih i manjinskih prava.

Učestvovala je u brojnim značajnim procesima na nivou Opštine Pljevlja i cijele države, posebno u dijelu kreiranja i sprovođenja javnih politika i zagovaranja prava osoba sa invaliditetom i rodne ravnopravnosti.

Bila je osnivačica kluba sjedeće odbojke *Set*.

Preminula je 2020, u 43. godini života, od posljedica tromba.



Mira Topovic – Mira was born 1972. in Pljevlja. She earned her degree in Law Science and has been a devoted long-time activist for the rights of persons with disabilities. She worked as an independent consultant in the field of veterans and disability protection, gender equality, and human and minority rights within the Municipality of Pljevlja. She was also among the founders of the Association of Paraplegics of Pljevlja.

Mira's role was instrumental in numerous significant processes both at the municipal level in Pljevlja and across the entire country, particularly in the creation and implementation of public policies. She was a strong advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and gender equality.

In addition, she founded the sitting volleyball club, *Set*.

Mira died 2020, at the age of 43. she passed away due to a thromboembolic event.

Srbija / Serbia



Julijana Čatalinac

Julijana Čatalinac, Somborka, sitna ženica u kolicima... Dama sa šeširom... Osoba puna znanja, rečita, informisana, koja pametno i mudro zbori...

Uz puno ljubavi i normalnog odnosa u porodici, uz podršku najbližih i okoline, Julijana je odlučila da prihvati svoj dermatomiozitis i da na najbolji mogući način osmisli svoj životni cilj, ne odstupajući ni mrvu. Učestvuje u osnivanju Udruženja distrofičara Sombora i tada točak obaveza, zadataka, ostvarenih ciljeva, izuzetnih rezultata, počinje vrtoglavo da se okreće.

Doprinos Julijane Čatalinac vidljivosti osoba sa invaliditetom i njihov izlazak iz anonimnosti je nemerljiv. Posebne zasluge joj pripadaju u realizaciji personalne asistencije u okviru Centra za samostalni život osoba sa invaliditetom po uzoru na najviše evropske socijalne standarde. Julijana je bila taj turbo motor, koji je pokretao rad mašinerije somborskog Centra.

Ta snažna mašina se zaustavila 23. jula 2023. Julijana je zaustavljena u koraku, ali njene ideje, toliko snažne iskrene i valjane, nastaviće da žive uprkos svemu.

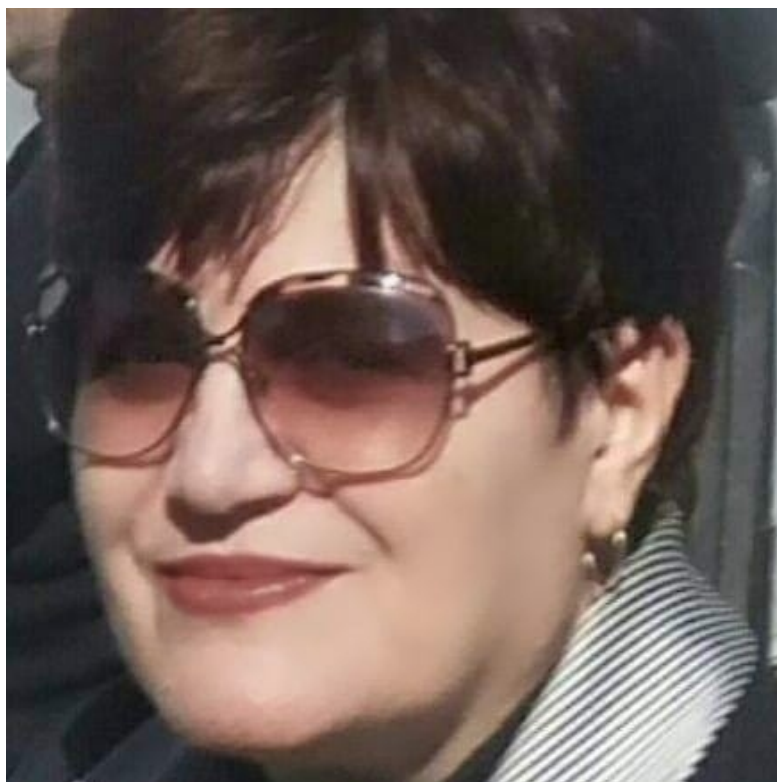


Julijana Čatalinac, a prominent woman from Sombor, a regal figure in a wheelchair... The lady with the hat... A person brimming with knowledge, eloquence, intelligence, and wisdom... With ample love and normalcy in her family life, Juliana chose to embrace her dermatomyositis, designing her life mission in the best possible way without any excuses.

She was one of the founding members of the Association of Dystrophic in Sombor, where the cycle of responsibilities, tasks, achieved goals, and exceptional results began to unfold. Juliana's contributions toward raising the visibility of people with disabilities and stepping out of the shadows are immeasurable.

The concept of independent living gripped her intensely, propelling her to implement a personal assistance service within the Centre for Independent Living Sombor, based on the model of the highest European social standards – she was like a turbo-charged machine.

This powerful machine came to a halt on July 23, 2023. Juliana's flow of life was stopped, but her robust, authentic, and meaningful ideas will continue to live on and resonate despite everything.



Gordana Stojanović

Gordana Stojanovic, od ranog prihvatanja života sa mišićnom distrofijom, svojim optimizmom i blagošću je privlačila druge ljude i vrlo brzo se zaposlila u Udruženju distrofičara Leskovca. To je bio posao koji je ispunjavao, jer je uspevala da svojim savetima pomaže drugim ljudima koji su bili u sličnoj situaciji, a posebno u radu sa ženama sa invaliditetom, jer su njima dugo bila “zatvorena većina vrata”, usled višestruke diskriminacije.

Kako su se nizale godine, počelo je da se priča i o samostalnom životu osoba sa invaliditetom, uključila se u promociju ove priče i učestvovala u formiranju Centra za samostalni život osoba sa invaliditetom Leskovca. Radila je na zastupanju prava osoba sa invaliditetom, a bila je i gradska odbornica u Skupštini Leskovca.

Njena poruka mladima sa invaliditetom je bila: *"Neka vas moguća tuga nikad ne porazi i neka vas moguća sreća nikad ne uplaši!"*

Gordana nas je napustila 28. maja 2021, nakon komplikacija sa koronavirusom.



Gordana Stojanovic, With her optimism and kindness, Gordana drew people towards herself, having accepted her Muscular Dystrophy at a young age. Her initial employment was at the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Leskovac, a rewarding job as she managed to provide advice and help to others in similar situations, particularly women with disabilities, who had long faced multiple discrimination and to them “most of the doors were closed”.

As time progressed, the conversation shifted towards the independent living of people with disabilities. Gordana took part in promoting this experience and participated in the foundation of the Center for Independent Life Leskovac. She continued to champion the rights of people with disabilities and served as a city councilwoman in the Assembly of Leskovac.

Her message to young individuals with disabilities resonates: *"Let potential sadness never defeat you, and let possible happiness never intimidate you!"*

Gordana left us on May 28. 2021, due to complications from the coronavirus.



Lepojka Čarević Mitanovski

Lepojka Čarević Mitanovski, liderka pokreta za prava osoba sa invaliditetom i ženskog pokreta u Srbiji, osnivačica *organizacije za podršku ženama sa invaliditetom ...IZ KRUGA – Beograd* i *Saveza organizacija za zaštitu prava i podršku ženama sa invaliditetom ...IZ KRUGA – Srbija*.

Tokom studija na Pravnom fakultetu u Kragujevcu jedina podršku su bili majka i brat. Iako je fakultet bio nepristupačan, „pokazivala je i potvrđivala da kretanje sa štakama ne donosi privilegije tokom studija, već zahteva dodatni napor da dokažeš da si jednaka sa drugima“.

Bila je članica *Saveta za rodnu ravnopravnost Vlade RS*, članica *Saveta za rodnu ravnopravnost grada Beograda*. Trudila se da kroz svoj angažman doprinese da se žene sa invaliditetom prepoznaju kao višestruko marginalizovana grupa, da se višestruka diskriminacija ugradi u zakone i da žene sa invaliditetom dobiju podršku kao što su: usluga personalne asistencije, pomoć u kući... i da, kada odluče da budu majke i supruge, imaju u tome podršku.

Lepojka je otišla 16. novembra 2015, a njen život i delo zauvek će ostati važan deo istorije pokreta za prava žena sa invaliditetom u Srbiji.



Lepojka Carevic Mitanovski, was a leader in the movement for the rights of persons with disabilities and the women's movement in Serbia. She founded the organization that supports women with disabilities ...IZ KRUGA - Belgrade, and the Alliance of Organizations for the Protection of Rights and Support for Women with Disabilities ...IZ KRUGA - Serbia.

During her studies at the Faculty of Law in Kragujevac, she was solely supported by her mother and brother. Despite the faculty's inaccessibility, she proved that “using crutches does not afford privileges during studies but rather demands additional effort to prove equality with others.”

She had been a member of the Council for Gender Equality of the Serbian Government and the Council for Gender Equality in the City of Belgrade. She focused her efforts on the recognition of women with disabilities as a multiply marginalized group, ensuring the incorporation of multiple discrimination into laws and ensuring that women with disabilities received support like personal assistance services and home help. She also believed in supporting women with disabilities who chose to be mothers and wives.

Lepojka passed away on November 16, 2015, due to heart complications. Still, her life and work will forever be a significant part of the history of the movement for the rights of women with disabilities in Serbia.



Gordana Rajkov

Gordana Rajkov je bila žena koja je rušila stereotipe i u dominantno muškom svetu krčila mesto žena sa invaliditetom. Kao profesor matematike, u vremenu kada je pristupačnost bila misaona imenica, davala je časove deci u kućnim uslovima i istovremeno tragala za osobama sa mišićnom distrofijom sa kojima bi mogla da radi na unapređenju položaja ovih osoba sa invaliditetom.

Tako je u banji Fojnica 1966. grupa mladih, obolelih od neuromišićnih bolesti, formirala Savez distrofičara Jugoslavije, a Gordana je bila jedina žena među osnivačima. Kao retka žena sa invaliditetom, bila je i među osnivačima EAMDA, u jednom mandatu njena predsednica, a u drugom generalni sekretar.

Za svoj rad odlikovana je Ordenom za rad i Ordenom zasluga za narod. Bila je prva osoba sa invaliditetom, Narodna poslanica u Skupštini Srbije u dva mandata.

Bila je jedna od potpredsednica Evropske mreže za samostalni život, učesnica stvaranja Centra za samostalni život Dablina u Irskoj, osnivačica Centra za samostalni život osoba sa invaliditetom Srbije, autorka brojnih publikacija i projekata koje u sebi sadrže zastupanje za prava osoba sa invaliditetom.

Svi projekti koje je osmišljavala sa svojim saradnicima su bili upućeni na to da podižu svest o invalidskoj problematici, kako kod osoba sa invaliditetom, donosioca odluka na svim nivoima, šire populacije, tako i medija. Važno mesto su bile žene sa invaliditetom i njihova višestruka diskriminacija u društvu, na koje je posebno ukazivala u svim razgovorima, obukama, projektima, zastupanjima.

Od samih početaka svoje uključenosti u invalidski pokret bila je svesna da se stvari za osobe sa invaliditetom menjaju na bolje samo onda kada su same osobe sa invaliditetom shvatile da u tome moraju da učestvuju, da grade svoje dostojanstvo, razvijaju svoje potencijale i žele da i same daju svoj doprinos društvu.

Gordana je otišla 14. juna 2022. kao žena koja je sama bila institucija, a raditi sa njom je značilo biti direktan učesnik stvaranja istorije invalidskog pokreta u SFRJ, Srbiji, ali i regionu Balkana i Evropi.



Gordana Rajkov was a trailblazer who dispelled stereotypes and paved the way for women with disabilities in a male-dominated world. As a mathematics professor at a time when accessibility was a distant concept, she tutored children at home while simultaneously seeking individuals with muscular dystrophy to support improving their position.

In 1966, a group of young people suffering from neuromuscular diseases founded the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Yugoslavia in Fojnica Spa. Gordana was the sole woman among the founders. A rarity for her time, as a woman with a disability, she also co-founded the European Alliance of Muscular Dystrophy, serving different terms as its president and general secretary.

For her contributions to improving the position of persons with disabilities in Yugoslavia, Gordana was awarded the Order for Work and the Order of Merit for the People. She made history as the first person/woman with a disability to serve as a Member of Parliament in Serbia for two mandates. She held the position of vice president of the European Network for Independent Living, helped establish the Center for Independent Living in Dublin, Ireland, and founded the Center for Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities in Serbia. She also authored numerous publications and projects promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

All the projects she and her collaborators conceived were intended to increase disability awareness at different levels – both among persons with disabilities, decision-makers at all levels, the general population, and the media.

From the earliest days of her involvement in the disability movement, she was aware that positive changes for people with disabilities would only occur when they themselves understood the essential role they played in shaping the changes, building their dignity, developing their potential, and contributing to society.

Gordana, an institution in herself, passed away on June 14, 2022. To work with her meant to be at the heart of the historical development of the disability movement in Yugoslavia, Serbia, but also the Balkans region, and Europe.

Putevi dostojanstva i jednakih prilika za sve – saradnice bez kojih bi neke stvari bile neostvarive

Paths of dignity and equal opportunities for all - associates without whom some achievements would be impossible



Sanja Žarković Zahirović

Sanja Žarković Zahirović - rođena je u Zadru 1963, i na svom životnom putu, uslovljenom raznim dešavanjima od rodnog grada, preko Zagreba do Tuzle, sve svoje ljudske i profesionalne potencijale stavila je u službu promovisanja i borbe za dostojanstvo i jednakost osoba sa invaliditetom. Ovo se nije odražavalo samo u zagovaračkim aktivnostima, dizajniranju kampanja, traganju za publikacijama i njihovom prevođenju na jezike naroda bivše Jugoslavije, već i u svakodnevnom odnosu prema osobama sa invaliditetom, članovima njihovih porodica i onima koji svoju profesionalnu karijeru razvijaju djelujući u oblasti invalidnosti.

Sanja je zaslužna za brojne prevedene i objavljene publikacije iz oblasti invalidnosti. U Meksiku je sudjelovala na Petoj generalnoj skupštini DPI tokom koje su uspostavljeni kontakti, a koji će tokom godina biti i više puta potvrđeni, sa nekim od ikona međunarodnog pokreta osoba sa invaliditetom kao što su: Judit Heumann, Adolph Ratzka, John Evans, Lex Freedom, Jenet Alem, Dinah Ratke i mnogi drugi. Posebno dobra saradnja u regionu je uspostavljena sa Centrom za samostalni život osoba sa invaliditetom Srbije i njegovom osnivačicom Gordanom Rajkov.

Sanja nije dočekala da vidi rezultate svog vizionarskog vjerovanja da budućnost pokreta osoba sa invaliditetom ovisi o uključivanju novih generacija osoba sa invaliditetom i njihovom osnaživanju da preuzmu uloge lidera i aktivista u promovisanju i borbi za prava i dostojanstvo osoba sa invaliditetom.

Od njenog odlaska 2015, pamtićemo izreku koja govori o tome da *aktivisti u pokretu osoba sa invaliditetom nikako ne smiju zaboraviti da nisu sami i da ne počinju svoju borbu od početka, već da nastavljaju da se bore ondje gdje su prethodne generacije aktivista stale i da boreći se za prava ustvari, stojimo na ramenima prethodnih generacija aktivista i zagovarača.*



Sanja Zarković Zahirovic - Sanja Zarković Zahirovic was born in Zadar in 1963, Throughout her life journey, marked by various events and travels from her hometown via Zagreb to Tuzla, she consistently dedicated her personal and professional abilities to advocating for the dignity and equality of people with disabilities. This dedication was evident in her advocacy activities, campaign designs, and her search and translations of related publications into the languages of the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, it was visible in her daily interactions with people with disabilities, their family members, and those who dedicated their professional lives to working in the disability sector.

Sanja translated numerous publications in the field of disability. She participated in the Fifth DPI General Assembly in Mexico, where she established connections and fostered cooperation with some of the iconic figures of the international movement of people with disabilities, including Judit Heumann, Adolph Ratzka, John Evans, Lex Freedom, Jenet Alem, Dinah Ratke, and many others. She notably had a strong regional association with the Center for Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia and its founder, Gordana Rajkov.

Sadly, Sanja did not live to witness the results of her visionary belief that the future of the disability movement depends on the integration of new generations of people with disabilities and their empowerment to take on leadership roles and join activism in advancing and fighting for the rights and dignity of people with disabilities.

Gone too soon in 2015, she leaves behind an indelible saying: *activists within the disability movement must never forget that they are not alone, and they are not starting their struggle from scratch. They continue the fight where previous generations of activists stopped. By fighting for rights, we stand on the shoulders of these generations of activists and advocates for disability rights.*

ŽENE SA INVALIDITETOM POKRETAČICE PROMENA

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i mnoge druge...**

