

RISEWISE -RISE Women with disabilities In Social Engagement

Results in Brief



Women living with disabilities help redesign their world

Although one in six EU citizens are affected by disability, many remain invisible because they lack access to education, culture, employment and public transport. RISEWISE offered women with disabilities a platform and tools to improve their situation.



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Disability – whether inherited or acquired through disease, age or injury – often limits activity and restricts participation. It can reduce transport availability, access to buildings, training and employment options, while curtailing cultural and social activities.

Research suggests that isolation and feelings of stigma are more often experienced by women. The **RISEWISE** project, undertaken with the support of the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** programme, was prompted by

[data from Eurostat](#) which shows how disadvantaged women with disabilities are, especially in the job market.

RISEWISE's social research, co-created with women with disabilities, led to shared actions such as the foundation of **RISEWISESPECIAL**, an NGO promoting sports

opportunities for women with disabilities.

“Disability is still usually medicalised, ignoring the lived experience of women with disabilities. We put these women at the centre of our project, not to be healed or cured, but to be heard,” explains project coordinator Cinzia Leone from the [University of Genova](#), the project host.

In 2017 Leone gave a speech to the Italian Parliament about women with disabilities and the job market. RISEWISE’s final report gives specific best practice recommendations, including the need for more participation of women with disabilities in public life.

Holistic analysis

RISEWISE’s 360-degree participatory methodology set out to better understand the need of the whole person rather than the disability. Across the workstreams, 25 % of participants were women with disabilities, who helped decide project content.

“We learned about the environments and daily life of these women, exploring different themes in different settings, from a multidisciplinary point of view,” says Leone.

The 16 partners were pan-European – Austria, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and Turkey – covering the private sector, NGOs and academia.

To identify areas for intervention, RISEWISE investigated a range of topics, including: social integration; educational opportunities; laws and the job market; methods of empowerment; stigma and violence; accessibility of digital tools in public spaces; and architectural design methods.

The results were wide-ranging. For example, researchers developed a chatbot using [Telegram](#), which draws on cooperative learning to help people with disabilities navigate cities. Annalisa Bovone, one of the researchers, received the Mela d’Oro-Marisa Bellisario prize from the president of the Italian Republic for this work.

Inclusive and non-discriminative policies

Around [80 million EU citizens](#) live a disability, a figure predicted to rise. The [WHO](#) estimates that “15 % of the world’s population lives with some form of disability, of whom 2-4 % experience significant difficulties in functioning.”

The EU’s [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#), serves to implement the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities](#)

(CRPD) which came into force in 2008 and to which the EU and its Member States are party. The strategy strives for social inclusion, with equal rights, opportunities and freedoms, alongside protection from discrimination regardless of age and gender.

In providing people living with disabilities a forum to express their concerns, while developing solutions to ongoing challenges, RISEWISE has contributed to these efforts.

RISEWISE's work has fed directly into content for social responsibilities training at [Ulyseus University](#), while research is ongoing into issues such as the design of urban spaces and the adoption of virtual reality for everyday life.

Keywords

RISEWISE, disability, access, participation, women, employment, transport, rights, social integration, stigma, digital tools, job

Project Information

RISEWISE

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