

The Meaningful Participation in Community Decision-Making Processes of People Living in Group Homes in Armenia

event-discussion report

28 July, 2023



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On July 28, 2023, “The Meaningful Participation in Community Decision-Making Processes of People Living in Group Homes in Armenia” project final event-discussion was organized.

More than 30 participants from the Republic of Armenia came together to discuss the existing challenges and legal gaps impacting persons with disabilities in the decision-making process of local self-government bodies.

This report aims to present the speakers’ speeches and summarize discussions and recommendations.

WELCOMING REMARKS

Gohar Khachatryan welcomed and thanked all participants for joining the event.

She briefly presented the overall process and the main results of the project since February 2023. In particular, it was presented:

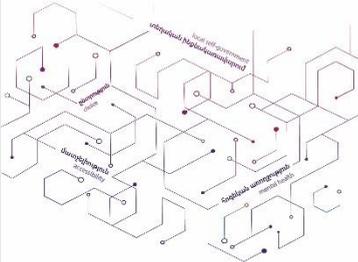
- ⇒ experience of cooperation with group homes and local self-government bodies,
- ⇒ capacity-building activities with people living in group homes and staff members,
- ⇒ research report, which presents the challenges and solutions to the participation of the community decision-making process based on the experience of persons with mental health conditions and legal research and analysis.



RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTATION

Արդյո՞ք համայնքային որոշումների
կայացման գործընթացները ներառական են
հաշմանդամություն ունեցող անձի համար

հետազոտական զեկույց



During the meeting, the research report developed within the framework of the project was presented.

It was noted that this topic has not yet been studied by any research in Armenia, so the research has more of an exploratory-explanatory character.

Taking into account the budget constraint, social research was carried out, which aims to raise new research questions, with the expectation of further in-depth study and offering ideas.

It was emphasized why group homes were chosen. It was discussed that it is impossible to ensure the protection of the rights of persons living with mental health conditions in care and psychiatric institutions, where people are isolated from the

community, deprived of the opportunity to exercise

Are Community
Decision-Making
Processes

INCLUSIVE

for a Person with a Disability?

research report summary

their rights and freedoms. It is in these institutions that the provision of care for persons living with mental health conditions continues to be largely provided in Armenia.

In international practice, the way to solve this problem is deinstitutionalization. In this context, the group home is one of the main alternative models offered in Armenia, particularly the state policy is aimed at expanding the group home model.

It was presented that the group home is a community-building model, where the activities of the employees should be aimed at developing the daily life skills and self-care abilities of the residents, as well as taking the necessary steps so that the residents can use the services available in the community without interruption and ensure the inclusion of residents in the community, and do not create any barriers or restrictions in that regard.



➤ ARE COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES INCLUSIVE FOR A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY?

Stella Chandirian and **Gohar Khachatryan** presented the systemic, legal and practical problems that hinder the participation of persons living with mental health conditions in the community decision-making process.

Those problems were addressed and possible solutions were presented, based on the experience of the residents of group homes operating in Armenia, the views of the staff of the group homes, the answers to the information survey addressed to local self-government bodies, as well as the analysis of international and domestic legal regulations.





After the presentation of the report, the attendees asked their questions and shared the problems that arise in practice, such as the lack of sensitivity of specialists, manifestations of discrimination in the public and private sector.



Yeghiazar Davtyan, representative of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures, emphasized the importance of ensuring accessibility during the activities of local self-government bodies and expressed his willingness to circulate the report in all communities of Armenia.





In her speech, **Elena Kirakosyan** emphasized the problems raised in the report and emphasized the readiness of the "Jermik Ankyun" fund in relation to the implementation of proposals for group homes. At the same time, she stated that she is hopeful that advocacy activities will be carried out in order to solve the systemic and legal problems described in the report.

Residents of group homes also shared their experiences and thoughts.

Gohar Voskanyan emphasized the importance of the availability and variety of community services.



The participants emphasized the importance of joint efforts to ensure the meaningful participation of persons living with mental health conditions in the community decision-making process.

