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Case Study - Advocating for Disability Rights in Cyprus

WP 2

Activity 1 (Cases)

Developed by Eurosuccess Consulting (EUROSC),
September, 2025



PROJECT NUMBER: 2024-1-FR01-KA220-VET-000244092



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Case Card

Name/ title of case study Organization/institution name:	Advocating for Disability Rights in Cyprus
Location:	Cyprus
Size and scale of organization:	Medium
Industry/Sector:	Nonprofit (Disability Rights / Human Rights / Civil Society)
Contact info (for follow up, if available):	
Additional details:	CCOD is a national umbrella organisation founded in 1984, acting as the official Social Partner on disability issues in Cyprus. It brings together representative disability organizations and plays a leading role in advocacy, legislative reforms, accessibility monitoring, and support services.
Sources of information/References:	Official website of CCOD (KYΣOA) https://www.kysoa.org.cy/el/home



Case Data/Content

<p>The bias illustrated in this case:</p>	<p>Disability bias</p>
<p>Context and specifics of the bias present:</p>	<p>Despite Cyprus’s ratification of international and European disability rights frameworks, people with disabilities in the country continue to face structural discrimination. This includes widespread inaccessibility of public spaces and services, underrepresentation in decision-making processes, limited employment opportunities, and entrenched societal stigma. Existing laws are not consistently implemented, and systemic barriers hinder full participation in social, economic, and political life.</p>
<p>Why this case matters:</p>	<p>This case illustrates a sustained and structured approach to combating disability bias at both policy and societal levels. The CCOD’s multifaceted work serves as a leading example of how civil society can push for inclusive legislation, transform social attitudes, and ensure that the voices of people with disabilities are heard and respected. The case also demonstrates successful alignment with EU and UN disability rights agendas, making it relevant and transferable to other contexts.</p>
<p>Action Plan - methods and strategies used to address the bias:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Advocacy: Lobbying for new laws and amendments, such as the Law on Consultation with CCOD on Disability Issues (N.143(I)/2006). • Social Dialogue: Participating in decision-making structures as the official Social Partner on disability matters. • Awareness and Education Campaigns: Promoting understanding of disability rights through media, events, and stakeholder engagement. • Support Services: Running initiatives like the Decision-Making Support Pilot Programme for people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. • Employment Incentives: Coordinating employer incentives to hire people with disabilities and challenging biases about work productivity. • Strategic Alliances: Working through the European Disability Forum to ensure representation at the EU level.





Measurable outcomes and impact:	<p>Introduction and enforcement of landmark national legislation mandating consultation with CCOD on disability-related decisions.</p> <p>Improved physical accessibility in public spaces and transport systems.</p> <p>Increased public awareness and positive media coverage of disability issues.</p> <p>Growth in participation of people with disabilities in public discourse and civil society roles.</p> <p>Better employment inclusion through incentive schemes and capacity-building initiatives.</p> <p>Enhanced monitoring mechanisms for rights compliance and social accountability.</p>
Key lessons learned:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meaningful inclusion requires systemic change, not just legal recognition.• Empowering people with disabilities to lead advocacy efforts ensures relevance, legitimacy, and sustainability.• Persistent engagement with state institutions, backed by legal provisions, can shift policy priorities.• Combining rights-based advocacy with service provision can produce both structural change and immediate support for individuals.• Cross-sector collaboration and EU-level alliances amplify local impact and visibility.
Other info/notes:	<p>CCOD continues to refine its strategy to address intersectional discrimination (e.g., gender, age, type of disability). The organization operates with a clear rights-based approach and avoids framing disability issues through charity or voluntarism. It advocates for full societal integration, echoing the principle “nothing about us without us.”</p>



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