Region/Country: Macedonia

Timeframe/dates: January 2018 – January 2020

Funder: European Union

Partners: Macedonian Institute for Media, National Council of People with Disability Organizations of Macedonia

The main aim of the project „Disability: A Matter of Perception“ is to strengthen visibility of persons with disabilities (PwD) in the media. The weakened role of the media as protectors of public interest in Macedonia on one hand, and the difficult climate in which civil society organisations (CSOs) operate on the other, led to the shrinking of media space for pressing needs of disadvantaged groups, and consequently to citizens’ misperceptions in recognising the existing discrimination. The invisibility of PwD in media hampers their true participation in public life and full exercise of human rights and social inclusion.

The expected impact on public will be achieved through combination of methods such as: capacity building, raising awareness and media content production and distribution, coalition-building, mobilizing stakeholders and policy-advocacy. Furthermore, through offered
sub-granting, CSOs will be provided with opportunity to independently create their own messages and projects which will further contribute to visibility and perception of people with disabilities by the general public.

**Project objectives:**

- Increased effectiveness of PwD's organisations by assuming assertive approach in communication with media;
- Improved understanding and inclusive journalism skills of media representatives;
- Established sustainable CSO-media cooperation mechanisms in support to participation and inclusion of PwD;
- Media invisibility of PwD placed higher on the policy-makers' agendas;

**Key activities:**

- Workshops for CSOs in order to improve skills of people with disabilities CSOs to communicate, advocate and lobby for their beneficiaries' interest, including approaching media, implementing campaigns and targeting messages to their audience;
- Mentorship for CSOs to implement their own mini campaigns;
- Production of PwD Visibility Handbook;
- Workshops for journalists on how to report disability;
- Coalition building activities aiming to foster sustainable cooperation between the PwD CSOs and media;
- Study on image of people with disabilities in Macedonian media.