

Assistive technology public distribution system in Latvia

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Latvia

- **The area around 64 589 km² (similar to the Netherlands)**
- **Population- about 2 000 000 people**
- **About 1 000 000-
live in or around Riga**



Review of system-building history

- **To 1995-** State company's monopoly (former Red Cross workshop assistive technology's)
- **1995- 1999-** State established Social Assistance Fund
- **1999- 2009-** State agency Technical Aid Centre (with the Danish government support)
- **From 2009-** National rehabilitation center
“Vaivari” Technical Aid Centre, Blind people Society and Deaf People Society

AT public distribution system principles

- **Assistive technology service and the payment basis issued by a medical prescription:**
 - Family doctor
 - Specialist
 - Therapists (occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech therapist, prosthetiz/orthotic)- AT for selfcare

AT public distribution system principles

- **Fabricated technical aids-** mainly NRC Vaivari TAC
- **Individual technical aids-** NRC Vaivari TAC and private Prosthetic/ orthotic workshops
- **State funding per capita:**
 - In 2012-0,70 EUR/capita (planned)
 - In 2011- 1,5 EUR/capita
 - Never exceeded 2,0 EUR/capita
- **Actually-** State is able to provide only about **70%** of the state programme services provided AT in the year- buying their own, colaboration with Municipalitys, Red Cross, Church etc.

Problems

- **Not a government priority “- chronic” lack of funding** – only 1 000 000 till 2 000 000 LVL compared to the estimated 3 50 0000 till 4 000 000 LVL per year
- **Lack of research activity’s in the field of Human functioning and its limitations**

Problems

- **Medical professional knowledge and skills shortages of the field of assistive technology does not allow them to issue adequate findings of the patients required technical aids**
- **Too small Latvian market for assistive technology's**

The possible options

- For the lack of funding in a situation where the country has put in place "strict cut-off" saving, realistic solution in the next few years can not be found
- Research on human health-related functioning can help the Ministry of Welfare raise Assistive Technologies in the State priority list above and also to better understand the Latvian saving's strategies real price for guarantees of human rights

The possible options

- **Additional functioning evaluation and selection of assistive technology in the context of a comprehensive rehabilitation plan:**
 - Mandatory for prostheses, orthoses, electric wheelchairs etc.
 - In the cases of doubts and conflicts
 - For evaluation of the results
- **Creation of the Functioning laboratory** (Riga Stradins university laboratory, a joint laboratory with NRC Vaivari etc.)

The possible options

- **Greater international cooperation to further reform the system in Latvia:**
 - to promote Assistive technologies market development and competition across the Latvian border
 - churches and charitable foundations again engaging Assistive Technologies System (deaconate and charitable organizations, the Red Cross, etc.)
 - to develop research in the evaluation of human functioning, the ICF applying etc.

Thank you!

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