

Canada-Latvia Collaboration, Education and Policy Development in Disability

In partnership with the School of Rehabilitation Therapy at Queen's University, the Latvian Ministry of Welfare, the Latvian State Health Insurance Agency, Riga Stradina University, The National Rehabilitation Centre in Vaivari, and the Baltics Initiative Program (BIP).

Dates:	April 2000 to December 2000
Primary sites:	Riga, Latvia
Budget:	\$78,360 CAD
Donor:	ICACBR/Queen's School of Rehabilitation Therapy and the Baltics Initiative Program via the Federation of International Training with contributions from various Baltic partners

Overview

As was detailed in the "The Introduction and Development of Community Based Rehabilitation in the Slovakia and in Latvia" section, many countries in the Baltics, including Latvia, had an institutional approach to the delivery of healthcare and rehabilitation services. In institutional settings, people with disabilities can become isolated from their communities, reducing their ability to participate socially, politically, and economically. Community based rehabilitation (CBR) can allow people with disabilities to have autonomy and to live and participate in their communities.



In 1998 the Latvian Government created a plan for healthcare reform centred on primary care. This framework also identified the need to improve rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. The framework had three components: policy development, education for rehabilitation personnel, and demonstration models of CBR services. The ICACBR worked to support these efforts and aid in the development of healthcare in Latvia.

This project's role within the greater framework created by the Latvian government had the goals of curricular development and policy development. The outcomes of the project were as follows:

- The ICACBR aided the Director of the Faculty of Rehabilitation at the Latvian Medical Academy to **design a curriculum that teaches concepts of CBR**. This curriculum could either be taught as an intensive four-week course or be integrated into existing curricula for medical, nursing, social work, rehabilitation, or public health students.
- **The project organized an educational program about policy development called "Policy Perspectives on CBR within Primary Health Care Reform"** to introduce policy makers, rehabilitation workers and educators to current trends in rehabilitation sciences. The program sought to give

decision makers the knowledge to develop strategies as they worked to implement policy in Latvia. The program focused on the concepts of development, finance, and management of CBR programs.

- The project **supported the Latvian Ministry of Welfare as they worked to include CBR in the Declaration for Health and Social Welfare Reform. This made CBR a core component of primary healthcare in the country.**
- The project organized practical demonstrations of clinical techniques at various community based rehabilitation centres to support the education of rehabilitation professionals.
- The project created relationships with various local and international partners. With these partners the centre planned to implement other projects in the future. The planned collaborations included education for rehabilitation workers, education of policy creators, management programs for healthcare administrators, and the creation of demonstration sites in Latvia to teach rehabilitation professionals.

This project helped Latvian officials to have a better understanding of how to implement CBR efforts effectively. The partnerships formed were strong, and both Canadian and Latvian team members were committed to advancing CBR as a fundamental component of Latvia's healthcare reform. Note, the project was committed to ensuring that women were equally represented in project efforts, and women participated in all seminars, meetings, and project activities.

Sources and Project Resources

1. Canada-Latvia Collaboration, Education and Policy Development in Disability*
2. Canada-Latvia Collaboration, Education and Policy Development in Disability website archive*
3. Advocacy Manual – Latvia

*used to generate this report