

Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reforms

Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reform Advocacy Strategic Plan



Contents:

- 1. Aim and methodology of the Coalition's Strategic Advocacy Plan
- 2. History, vision, mission, principles, values of the coalition
- 3. Current situation
- 4. Analysis of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, threats
- 5. Strategic goals and objectives of the Coalition
- 6. Activities/Services: responsible entities, deadlines, outcomes
- 7. Advocacy tactics toolkit
- 8. Risks/Risk Management

1. Aim and Methodology of the Coalition's Advocacy Strategic Plan

The Advocacy Strategic Plan of the Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reforms aims to strengthen the latter's influence on decision-makers, as well as describe the steps that can contribute to the development of the Coalition's members' institutional capacity in advocacy.

The Advocacy Strategic Plan of the Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reforms was developed based on various sources of information:

- The Strategic Plan, Communication Strategy, as well as the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the Coalition were studied.
- A short survey was conducted online (in google form format) with the member-organizations and individual members of the Coalition.
- The results of the meeting held on January 21-22, 2023, dedicated to the development of the advocacy strategic plan of the Coalition, were analyzed. The meeting aimed at the formulation of the strategic goals of the Coalition's advocacy activities, the main objectives thereof, the results of the strengths and weaknesses analysis, and the actions to be taken in the next four years.

2. History, Vision, Mission, Principles, and Values of the Coalition

History of the Coalition

The Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reforms was formed by Agate Rights Defense Center for Women with Disabilities NGO in 2017, aiming at the consolidation of the efforts of the civil society towards advocacy for the adoption of legislation on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reform is the largest coalition of disability organizations and and is composed of 14 member organizations and 5 individual members.

Member	Type of Organization	Town
Agate Rights Defense Center for Women with Disabilities NGO	A disability rights organization	Gyumri
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly – Vanadsor	CSO	Vanadsor
Full Life	A disability rights organization	Stepanavan

Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities NGO	A disability rights organization	Vanadsor
We Can NGO	A disability rights organization	Yerevan
The Voice of Silence NGO	A disability rights organization	Yerevan
Sipan Asatryan	Individual	Yerevan
Armine Ghazaryan	Individual	Yerevan
Prkutyun Salvation Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities	NGO	Yerevan
Caritas Aregak Foundation	Foundation	Gyumri
Skarp NGO	A disability rights organization	Yerevan
Astghatsolk NGO	NGO	Chambarak
Armenian Camp NGO	NGO	Yerevan
White Hawk	A disability rights organization	Spitak
Nare Alaverdyan	Individual	Abovyan
EasyLife NGO	A disability rights organization	Gyumri

Disability-Inclusive Development NGO	A disability rights organization	Yerevan
Mushegh Hovsepyan	Individual	Yerevan
Union of the Deaf of Armenia NGO	An organization of persons with hearing impairment	Yerevan
Anahit Chilingaryan	Individual	Yerevan

The Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reforms is registered as a legal entity and is a formal association of organizations and individuals.

Vision of the Coalition

The vision of the Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reform is to have an inclusive society where persons with disabilities have protected rights and equal opportunities to realize their potential.

Mission of the Coalition

The Coalition for Inclusive Legal Reforms is an association of disability advocacy organizations, human rights NGOs, and individuals that aims to advance the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities through advocacy and public awareness.

Values and principles of the Coalition

- Inclusion,
- Rights-based approach,
- Non-discrimination,
- Equality and solidarity,
- Accountability and transparency.

The Coalition presents the interests of persons with disabilities without discrimination.

As an association of non-governmental organizations and individuals, the Coalition is guided by the principles of solidarity and partnership, respect for its members' independence, impartial and participatory management.

Leadership by persons with disabilities as a principle and an end result lies at the core of the Coalition's activities.

The ongoing operations of the Coalition are conducted by the staff, recruited within the framework of the EU-funded "Towards Inclusive Armenia" project, consisting of the coordinator of the Coalition, a communications coordinator, an advocacy coordinator, a legal coordinator, two lawyers, and a community empowerment coordinator. The General Assembly, composed of the Coalition member organizations and individual members, is the supreme decision-making body of the Coalition.

3. Current Situation

In May 2021, the RA Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted. The new law is the result of the years-long advocacy of disability rights organizations. It mainly reflects the positions and recommendations of the civil society. Particularly, the law defines the safeguards of accessibility, independent living, access to courts, and reasonable accommodations. The law prohibits disability-based discrimination, including the failure to ensure reasonable accommodations. The law also allows non-governmental organizations to file a lawsuit on behalf of persons with disabilities in case of discrimination. The adoption of the law attests to the political will of the incumbent government for providing rights-based solutions to the issues of persons with disabilities, even though there is a need for creating mechanisms for the implementation of the law and raising public awareness on the law. In particular, it is problematic that the law does not provide for the creation of an independent state entity for the control of accessibility and the enhancement thereof.

The development and implementation of strategic plans, designed by the Government for the sectors of education, healthcare and employment, the implementation of reforms under the RA – EU Common and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, and the reports of the UN treaty bodies (CRPD, CRC, CEDAW) for the upcoming years are key for the further development of the legislation and policy on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. At the same time, the instable human rights policy of the incumbent government and the low level of public trust in state institutions create obstacles for the effective implementation of reforms.

In the private sector, the continuous development of information technologies and social entrepreneurship sectors is noteworthy. The development of the IT sector enables the attraction of resources and capacity of sectoral organizations in the events aimed at ensuring the accessibility of information and communication. The increase in the social entrepreneurship assistance projects, which is very much due to the enhanced engagement of international donor organizations, enables a higher involvement of persons with disabilities in those projects.

It should be noted that the insufficient and inappropriate measures, undertaken by the state in the field of mental health, were demonstrated especially in 2020, after the war unleashed by Azerbaijan against the Republic of Artsakh. Thousands of servicemen are in need of psychological support, but over the past years, the state has not created the necessary services, understaffing issues have not been addressed, and decent treatment conditions have not been provided to guarantee psychological support and service. According to the RA Prosecutor's Office, a number of recorded cases of committed and attempted suicide are

directly related to the psychological problems caused by the war unleashed in the Republic of Artsakh in 2020. In other words, the state, having a five-year strategic plan for the mental health sector reform, has hardly implemented the measures planned by the strategy and has hardly fulfilled its duty of protecting the mental health of the population.

The Coalition must consistently pursue solutions to the above-mentioned problems and act based on a clear strategic plan for the protection of its own interests, aiming at the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

- Human resources
- Logistics
- Operational procedures

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
 Members and experts in various member organizations Representation of persons with different disabilities Leadership by persons with disabilities Various types of organizations represented (CSOs, disability organizations, service providers) Involvement of organizations with advocacy experience Links with decision makers and international organizations Freedom, enjoyed by individual members in their choice of advocacy methods Support to beneficiaries with disabilities through the member organisations of the Coalition 	 Restrictions on the implementation of advocacy by organizations receiving grants from the state Lack of opportunities for cooperation outside the coalition Lack of membership culture Lack of consensus Focus on diverse directions by the organizations working in the same field Lack of organizations that would cover all issues and groups Overload for the members Lack of sensitivity Logistics
 Logistics Representation at the local level High visibility in mass media Collaborative response to various issues Own website A clearly formulated mission, availability of strategic documents 	 Not represented in all marzes Lack of resources owned by the Coalition and the use thereof by its members Difference between general organizational rules and program conditions Lack of planning

 Democratic governance and inclusiveness Registration of the Coalition 	
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
 Representation of persons with disabilities in the state administration system Readiness for mutual assistance among the organizations Unity of approaches Ability to exclude duplication of effort and consolidation of resources Online communication tools Availability of capacity and low barriers Availability of a network Ability to involve other organizations Opportunities and support due to organizational flexibility Interest in the Coalition by international organizations Cooperation with the media 	 Political instability High risk of aggression Counter-propaganda by various actors pursuing other interests

5. Strategic goals and objectives of advocacy by the Coalition

Based on the results of the SWOT analysis of the Coalition, the following strategic goals and objectives have been formulated. While formulating the goals and objectives, the levels of effectiveness of mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of policies, legislative norms and by-law standards as well as those of behavioral change have been taken into account.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1.

All legal grounds for inclusion of persons with disabilities exist in the RA and meet international standards.

Objective

- 1.1 The legislative framework on persons with disabilities meets international standards.
- 1.2 In existing national strategies, issues of persons with disabilities are prioritized, and the existing gaps have been reflected in the new strategies.
- 1.3 Primary and secondary legislation and other legal acts related to persons with disabilities are mutually harmonized.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2.

Decision-makers and implementers at national, local and business levels have sufficient will, knowledge/awareness and resources to address the issues of persons with disabilities.

Objective

- 2.1 Active agents at the national level (government, ministry, etc.) take necessary steps to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities.
- 2.2 Funds have been earmarked in the annual budget at the local level (regional administration, LSG and so on) to implement projects, promoting the engagement of persons with disabilities.
- 2.3 At the level of business entities, there is a favorable environment for untapping the professional potential of persons with disabilities.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3.

Persons with disabilities and the community around them behave responsibly and inclusively in relation to the problems of persons with disabilities.

Objective

- 3.1 Persons with disabilities are aware of their rights and are motivated to participate in political processes.
- 3.2 The public recognizes the impact of environmental barriers in the process of inclusion of persons with disabilities.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4.

The Coalition has sufficient institutional capacity to protect the interests of persons with disabilities.

Objective

- 4.1 Coalition members have knowledge and experience in strategic communications, advocacy and fundraising.
- 4.2 The Coalition has financial and material capacity.
- 4.3 The Coalition is recognized within the international community as an ACTIVE agent in the RA, pursuing SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES and is an active member of the international disability movement.

6. ACTIONS, RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES, TIMELINE, INDICATORS

Strategic Goal 1.All legal grounds for inclusion of persons with disabilities exist in the RA and meet international standards.	Action	Responsible entity	Timeline	Indicator
Objective 1.1 The legislative framework on persons with disabilities meets international standards.	1.1.1 To conduct a comparative study of laws on protection of persons with disabilities in education, healthcare, labor, and welfare as well as of legal documents reflecting international standards		May – June 2023	a set of recommendations on existing discrepancies
	1.1.2 To submit the results of the study of laws and international legal documents on the rights of persons with disabilities in the sectors of education, health, labor, and social protection to the National Assembly in the form of recommendations		July 2023	A letter with recommendations - request
	1.1.3 To produce videos to raise awareness on the importance of deinstitutionalization, and the acceleration of this process		2023	4 videos

Objective 1.2 In existing national strategies, issues of persons with disabilities are prioritized, and the existing gaps have been reflected in the new	1.2.1 To study the existing national strategies and draw up a set of recommendations based on existing gaps	In the course of 2023	A new package of recommendations
strategies.	1.2.2 To meet with the representatives of the legislative and executive branches of power to ensure that disability issues are prioritized in national strategies	In the course of 2023	Minutes of the meetings Recommendations are reflected in the strategies.
	1.2.3 To organize a meeting with the Minister of Health and other representatives of the Ministry regarding the adoption of a palliative care strategy document	2024	2 meetings
Objectives 1.3 Primary and secondary legislation and other legal acts related to persons with disabilities are mutually harmonized.	1.3.1 To create a working group to identify inconsistencies in the primary and secondary legislation and other legal acts related to persons with disabilities	September 2023 – March 2024	A document, recording the cases of inconsistencies in the primary and secondary legislation and other legal acts related to persons with disabilities
	1.3.2 To compile a package of recommendations and submit it to the executive and legislative branches of power in RA	March – April, 2024	A package of recommendations

STRATEGIC GOAL 2. Decision-makers and implementers at national, local and business levels have sufficient will, knowledge/awareness and resources to address the issues of persons with disabilities.			
Objective 2.1 Active agents at the national level (government, ministry, etc.) take necessary steps to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities.	2.1.1 To printing and distribute booklets and guides on physical and information accessibility for building capacity at state, local government and regional entities dealing with disability issues	2025	100 copies of the guide are printed 400 copies of the booklet are printed
	2.1.2 To conduct surveys among persons with disabilities, living across the territory of the RA on the importance of creating an accessibility committee	2025-2026	Results of a survey conducted among 1000 people
Objective 2.2 Finances have been earmarked in the annual budget at the local level (regional administration, LSG and so on) to implement projects, promoting the	2.2.1 To meet with LSG representatives in order to amend the annual budgets of municipalities to enable the implementation of projects to promote the engagement of persons with disabilities	2025	Recording the results of these meetings

engagement of persons with disabilities.	2.2.2 To organize meetings in order to amend the annual municipal budgets to implementat projects to promote the participation of persons with disabilities	2025	2 organized press conferences
Objective 2.3 At the level of business entities, there is a favorable environment for untapping the professional potential of persons with disabilities.	2.3.1 To create and distribute information videos online and offline in order to increase the level of awareness and knowledge among persons with disabilities regarding state employment programs and professional orientation services	2026	10 information videos
	2.3.2 To organize awareness raising meetings with employers regarding work with persons with disabilities, non-discrimination approaches and provision of reasonable accommodations	2026	11 meetings
	2.3.3 To conduct a study to assess the situation of the involvement of persons with disabilities in the labor market and to remove the existing obstacles	2026	A study report

STRATEGIC GOAL 3. Persons with disabilities and the community around them behave responsibly and inclusively in relation to the problems of persons with disabilities.			
3.1 Persons with disabilities are aware of their rights and are motivated to participate in political processes.	3.1.1 In order to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in electoral and political processes, to organize meetings with the representatives of the local government and the leadership of regional administrations in order to present their work.	2026	20 meetings 500 participants
	3.1.2 To organize awareness raising meetings on the right to independent living among persons with disabilities and their families	2026	20 meetings 200 persons with disabilities and members of the families of persons with disabilities
3.2 The public recognizes the impact of environmental barriers in the process of inclusion of persons with disabilities.	3.2.1 To organize staged performances with the participation of or without the involvement of persons with disabilities and on topical issues, deserving coverage	2026	4 stage performances with an audience of 400-500 viewers

	3.2.2 To tour around the town to check the accessibility of towns by a person without disability (using a wheelchair or a cane)	2026	10 rounds
STRATEGIC GOAL 4. The Coalition has sufficient institutional capacity to protect the interests of persons with disabilities.			
Objective 4.1 Coalition members have knowledge and experience in strategic communications, advocacy and fund raising.	4.1.1 To organize awareness raising courses for Coalition members for the effective implementation of advocacy activities through delegating the service to a relevant sectoral expert	2024	10 courses have been organized.
	4.1.2 To organize expos on advocacy in all RA marzes and the capital	2024 – 2025	11 advocacy activities have been organized.
4.2 The Coalition has financial and material capacity.	4.2.1 To organize an online workshop among Armenian and German organizations	2024	The minutes of a meeting held

	4.2.2 To organize courses on grant proposal writing within the Coalition	2024	4 courses
	4.2.3 To establish a clear procedure through job division within the Coalition to apply for grants	2024	A document, describing the procedure for grant application and proposal drafting
4.3 The Coalition is recognized within the international community as an active agent in the RA, pursuing solutions to the problems of persons with disabilities and is an active member of the international disability movement.	4.3.1 Meetings with the representatives of international organizations and various embassies	2024-2026	Minutes of meetings held
	4.3.2 To collect data on international networks and coalitions through online channels and get in touch with them to tell them about the willingness of the Coalition to be included in those lists	2024-2026	A list of data on international networks
	4.3.3 To produce videos on the activity of the Coalition with scripts, translated into English	2024-2026	1 video

7. Tools and Challenges

To achieve its advocacy goals, the Coalition must employ a variety of strategies and tactics. This will allow the Coalition to conduct credible and impactful research, engage in lobbying, well-designed advocacy, grassroots mobilization, digital campaigning, fundraising, accessible/available

communications and strong media relations. The Coalition must also consider ways for building strong alliances and networks, developing capacity, and promoting active citizenship to build its advocacy, starting from the local upto the national level and scale it up onto the international level.

Research

Well-substantiated research is an important part of effective advocacy. Research or campaigns that are not supported by adequate evidence seriously undermine the Coalition's influence and reputation. Good quality research underpins policy development and provides evidence to support advocacy propositions. The Coalition may conduct research at different stages of advocacy interventions on a case-by-case basis. It can collect human interest stories to make its advocacy messages more impactful to the media and the wider public, thereby promoting policy amendments. Case studies will be developed to illustrate the positive impact of the Coalition's programs on beneficiaries.

Lobbying

Through lobbying, the Coalition will engage directly with decision makers and persuade them to support its cause. Since successful lobbying requires a range of skills and a personal/unique style, lobbying activity may vary from case to case, and Advocacy and Communications coordinators at the Coalition should participate in lobbying and influencing capacity building training. Reaching out to people, writing effective letters, building rapport with the target are important lobbying tactics that will be used by the Coalition. Emphasis will also be placed on ensuring face-to-face engagement with key decision makers.

Work with the Media

Working with local and national media is essential to an effective PR strategy. Based on the advocacy communications strategy, the Coalition should develop a clear media engagement action plan to reach a wider audience. The right coverage of the Coalition can be crucial in both fundraising and awareness raising activities, having an influence on public opinion, putting pressure on policy makers who can bring about real change. If the Coalition wants to maintain its high reputation with journalists, it must deal with the media in a professional manner, providing targeted information, useful promotional materials and skilled spokespeople. It is desirable for the Coalition to be in constant contact with at least two media outlets at all times to contact these media outlets immediately in case of necessity or urgency to spread information/statements or quickly refute disinformation.

Public campaign

The Coalition may resort to the application of public campaign tactics, if absolutely necessary, unless other methods prove ineffective. Public campaigning is a means of creating and mobilizing public pressure to achieve change. Mobilization strategies and actions through which people's voices, concerns and demands are clearly heard by decision makers are central to achieving sustainable and positive change in people's lives. This means preliminary preparation and creation of excellent communication materials, providing clear information on online platforms, official websites/social pages, and petitions if necessary, etc.

Mobilization strategies and actions must be used carefully by the Coalition so as not to jeopardize the safety of local partners and stakeholders, as well as to undermine its advocacy and lobbying efforts at the national level.

Grants, Awarded by the Coalition to Community Action Groups/NGOs/Its Members

Mobilization and public campaigning also involve providing grants to community groups to build their capacity for advocacy and changes to support local initiatives. This will allow local activist groups to raise their voices to be heard by public policy makers at the national level, shape public debate and influence public decisions. By supporting the development of active community groups and sectoral NGOs, the Coalition builds foundational support for its advocacy campaigns.

Online and digital campaign

The growth of Internet and mobile phone usage has enhanced the potential of digital and online campaigning, enabling a multitude of diverse channels of communication online and through ICT, though it may be a challenge to keep up with digital and social media developments.

• The more common the Internet and mobile phones become, the higher potential impact of digital and online campaigns. The Coalition can use many different channels to communicate online and through ICT. Depending on who the target audience is and what kind of media they have access to and are used to, the Coalition will choose the most appropriate tools to make advocacy work even more effectively through online campaigning. The tools used include text messages via mobile phones, posting online video and audio clips onto YouTube and other online sites, and posting to social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

Fundraising for Advocacy

Raising money for the Coalition is very important. Investments or financial resources may be doubled up if this process is also accompanied by an advocacy initiative. An institutionalized fundraising by the Coalition may include a major component of advocacy work. This will ensure the sustainability of the Coalition's advocacy work.

But the Coalition's advocacy activity shall not be confined to fundraising from institutional donors. Other fundraising tools, such as contributions by individuals and donations, will also be explored and used. Many organizations reach out to individual donors combining a number of tools, such as a direct email letter, text messaging, social media, and special fundraising events.

The Coalition team should focus on developing real, personal relationships with potential major donors. Traditionally, requests for "major gifts" are made at a formal meeting, when one or two people from the organization's staff approach the donor with a pitch for support.

The Coalition may explore and take advantage of existing state co-financing opportunities. Also, the Coalition may resort to online fundraising, which may be informed by the grounds/evidence collected during advocacy activities.

Capacity building

There are some obstacles to the effective involvement of the Coalition in both national policy, and legislative reforms in Armenia. It is sometimes because of the insufficient resources and professional capacities within the Coalition in terms of key advocacy, communication, influence, and networking areas, which restricts effective engagement in policy-related processes. The Coalition should regularly implement programs and training sessions, aimed at strengthening the abilities and knowledge of its members.

1. Risks/Risk management

Advocacy is an active influence on policies and political decision-making processes. To ensure the normal course of such influence, it is necessary to manage the anticipated and existing risks. Risks are factors, events or circumstances that could be detrimental to the management, finances, reputation and security of the Coalition, thereby hindering the achievement of its objectives. It may not be possible to avoid or eradicate all risks, but they can be proactively managed.

The following general risks, related to advocacy, should be considered and managed well.

Potential reputational risk – Advocacy is often at a high level. If the Coalition admits a mistake, it does so publicly.

Potential relationship risk – This risk can damage existing relationships if allies do not support a policy position.

Potential expectations risk – A high-profile campaign can create unrealistic expectations from supporters, partners or beneficiaries. Most changes come slowly and expectations must be managed.

Potential risk –It may come afore within staff, partners and the project team when the Coalition talks about controversial issues.

Risk management is making informed judgments about opportunities and risks in advocacy and promotion quickly, effectively, and on an ongoing basis. When managed effectively, it will increase opportunities, lead to fewer failures and be more cost-effective as we strive to make an impact in our work.

The risk mitigation recommendations presented below should be followed:

Security Risk - Coalition members are informed of the organizational security emergency plan to encounter real threats and act in accordance with applicable security guidelines.

Political risk:

- It is necessary to maintain relations with high-ranking government officials,
- It is necessary to be constructive in the field of advocacy and policy-making,
- It is necessary to formulate and disseminate messages carefully,
- It is necessary to ensure no partisan affiliation,
- It is necessary to find allies who can help in times of trouble.

Reputational Risk:

- In order to be a success in marketing activities, place the name of the Coalition on top, ensure the branding of the Coalition.
- Make a careful selection of allies,
- Treat opponents with respect by engaging in a principle-driven/constructive debate,
- Be ready to stop in a timely manner.

Financial risks – These risks may imply a decrease in the number of potential funders or the absence thereof. In such a case, it is necessary to act as follows:

- To organize regular meetings and consultations with major donors,
- To diversify the funding portfolio, explore alternative fundraising opportunities, including public co-financing, public and digital fundraising.

.