



Ascend project goes to

LEVEL UP!
ACCELERATING CHANGE



Stories from participants

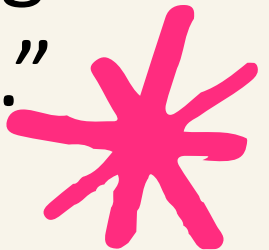




Lydia Vlagsma, Netherlands

[Read Lydia's story on EDF's blog](#)

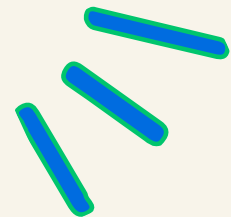
“Despite differing national contexts, a wide range of policy issues and different approaches to social change, exchanging experiences with these issues turned out to be the most interesting and idea-sparking aspect of the LevelUP event.”





Michal Homola, Slovakia

“All the practical skills (learned at LevelUp) can help us, the disabled people, to be able to better advocate for ourselves in the communication with various stakeholders and policy makers. For me is this a strong impulse to become more active in this field. I was able to realize what potential we have, despite our disabilities or special needs. And got motivated to use it more than I was doing it before.”





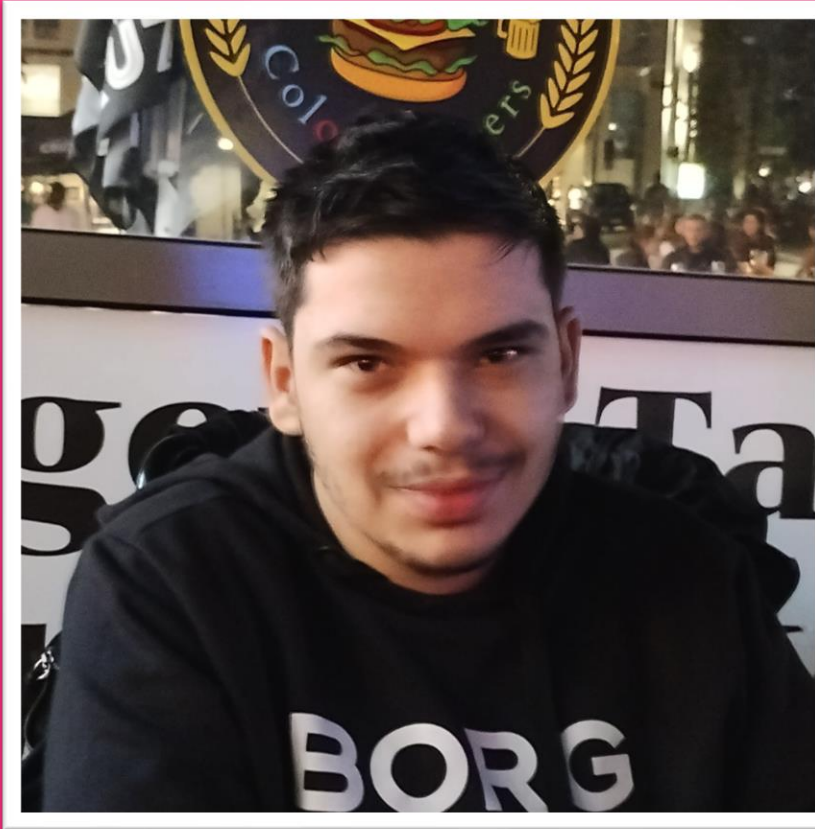
Dávid Aranyos, Hungary

[Read Dávid's story on EDF's blog](#)



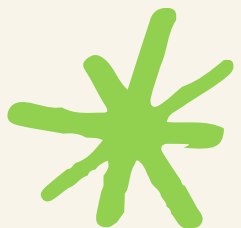
“We talked about how to work with politicians. I shared my experience when we worked with the United Nations (UN). When we represented persons with disabilities from Hungary. We learned about how to organize a conference for everyone.”





Youssef Ayyash, Romania

“Overall I think this extended my knowledge about special needs, and I really appreciate the opportunity to participate in such a workshop... The one about public speaking was really amazing. I had opportunities to learn how to manage my fear, appreciate myself for being the one there who gets to share their opinion to the public, controlling your breathing, flux of words and structure of the speech. Overall I had a tonne of exercises that helped and continue to help me with public speaking.”

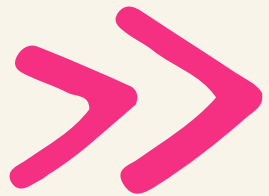




Ivan Karagyozov, Bulgaria

Photo: Krisztian Kovacs, Raluca Ciucanu, Hristina Nacheva and Ivan Karagyozov

“A very good example of engaging the participants in the sessions is the role-playing exercises. They are also key to engaging participants and are a type of "brainstorming" from which many fresh ideas can be drawn. The way the sessions are organized makes them entertaining, interesting and engaging.”





Hristina Nacheva, Bulgaria

“The workshops were structured in interesting, engaging ways and would benefit many of the participants and be able to apply what they learn.

Also interesting were the presentations of new technologies that are quite used by young people and can be applied in areas where their use is not so widespread.”



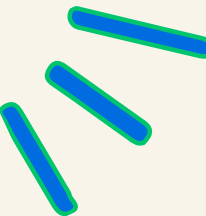


“In my home country, Hungary, it is exceedingly difficult for a wheelchair user to do so. Train stations are often inaccessible, and wheelchair assistance must be booked 72 hours in advance. When I moved to the Netherlands, it was a pleasant surprise to me that there, the assistance for wheelchair-user train passengers was working smoothly.”

Balázs Markos, Hungary



[Read Balázs story on EDF's blog](#)





The Ascend project is funded by Citi Foundation and coordinated by the European Disability Forum. This one-year programme is focused on strengthening the capacity of the disability movement in Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia.



Citi Foundation

