

Lebenshilfe Österreich

Lebenshilfe Österreich is the oldest and largest organisation advocating on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities and their relatives in Austria. Lebenshilfe promotes the principle of equal opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities and actively supports changes towards an inclusive society following the guidelines of the UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Lebenshilfe Österreich was founded in 1967 as an umbrella organisation.

One of the central objectives is to promote and achieve **inclusion**. An inclusive society takes people with all their differences into account. It acknowledges and values the diversity in our society.

Citizens with intellectual disabilities have the same rights and have to be offered the same opportunities as everybody else.

To ensure these rights and opportunities, people with intellectual disabilities have to be supported with assistance being tailored to their individual needs.

The members of Lebenshilfe Österreich are 8 regional organisations. These regional Lebenshilfe organisations provide a variety of support systems for people with intellectual disabilities and their relatives. The services offered within the regional Lebenshilfe organisations are based on a shared set of objectives, values and standards developed commonly within Lebenshilfe Österreich.

Lebenshilfe Österreich as a federal association concentrates on providing advocacy in policy and practice, networking and public relations activities work as well as supporting the Lebenshilfe membership. Lebenshilfe Österreich organizes, exchanges and encounters, provides innovative trainings as well as the coordination of interest between persons with disabilities, families / relatives, front line staff and the social and political environment.

People with disabilities are actively included as self-advocates in participating on all operating levels of Lebenshilfe Österreich.

People with learning disabilities are supported to find their way to self-advocacy and social participation.

Factual figures of Lebenshilfe Österreich:

- Around 11.000 persons with intellectual disabilities are supported by Lebenshilfe.
- Around 7.250 people are employed within the Austrian network of Lebenshilfe.
- More than 1.000 volunteers and 800 persons carrying out alternate civilian services (Zivildienst) are indispensable helpers.
- Over 500 Lebenshilfe facilities offer services to people with disabilities throughout Austria.

These **facilities** consist of inclusive kindergartens, production- and workplaces. They also offer housing facilities, as well as leisure activities and provide part time living assistance and full assisted living for young and old adults with disabilities.

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