

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Marija Zupanec has lived in Rogaška Slatina all her life. In 2018 she started to build and develop programmes and services for psychosocial support and inclusion of people with disabilities in various activities in the border tourist municipality. She founded a private organisation in the field of personal assistance and obtained social enterprise status in 2023.

Together with her colleagues, Marija fills an important gap in the provision of public services: She is committed to developing activities to enable people with various forms of physical and/or mental disabilities to enjoy a good quality of life. In recent years, Zavod Uvid has also been successful in project tenders (Norway Grants, Erasmus, national projects); as "pioneers", they are gradually and comprehensively tackling the issue of cycling for people with disabilities on the Beaver Centre's cycle paths.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Although it is a young organisation, its most important results show the breadth of their work and their holistic approach. They have set up advice centres for older people and people with disabilities, providing them with verified and up-to-date information in several areas relevant to the needs of their users. More than 50 personal assistants are involved in the functioning personal assistance network, with interaction taking place between the user, the personal assistant, key members of the user's environment and the social worker. They want to show

users that it is possible to live well even with some disadvantages. They involve them in various programmes, offer long-term unemployed people on-the-job training and prepare them for a new working environment.



Figure 1. Marija Zupanec on an adapted bicycle for people with disabilities.

They provide comprehensive care for a large group of people with various forms of disabilities. They also work increasingly closely with the local community - the municipality, the local action group, the development agency, volunteers, associations, a primary school for children with special needs, etc. As advocates for people with disabilities, they sensitise society as a whole to the fact that there are groups of people in the community who would like to cycle but cannot because they do not have suitable bicycles. In co-operation with other actors in the local area, they will therefore gradually try to develop the full range of activities towards a bicycle product for businesses of people with disabilities or as a tourism product.

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