

# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT THE PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS IN ACTIVIST EVENTS?

## The context and the problem

In conditions of legal crisis in Belarus, when civil rights are systematically violated and public organizations are dissolved, many activists have been forced to leave the country. Despite these difficulties, the civil society continues its activities, organizing conferences, summer schools, educational visits, and other long-term events. **This document advocates for the need to support the participation of people with children in such initiatives, emphasizing the need for additional funding and consideration of parental needs.**

## At the moment:

78% of respondents became less involved in activist life after having children.

68% of respondents do not have relatives nearby to care for their children with them during activist events.

21% of the respondents have been unable to participate in long-term activist programs in the last two years. More than half of them indicated that the conditions and structure of events did not consider their parental needs or did not allow for the participation of children at all.

## Why is this important for donor/partner organizations?

Supporting the participation of activists with children in events is a manifestation of democratic values, inclusivity, and the long-term sustainability of the civil sector. In today's world, civil society requires significant investments in ethical and inclusive standards, and the participation of people with children is one of the most important components of this process.

- **Investing in democratic values and inclusion**

The concept of civil society as a whole is quite costly. Complying with environmental standards and caring for the environment, choosing ethical catering or ethical production of promotional materials, supporting local creators, and designing an inclusive version of a website entail significant expenses and certainly do not make the project cheaper. Nevertheless, we strive to meet these standards. Enabling activists with children to participate in activities is also an expression of inclusion.

- **Project sustainability through supporting expertise development**

NGO participants and activists have been accumulating experience, expertise, and competencies for years, and parenthood does not negate it, even if working together

now requires more flexibility. Supporting people with children is a contribution to maintaining activist teams and gaining experience.

- **Adherence to the principles of non-discrimination**

The activist community is based on the principles of solidarity and support. Inclusion costs money and extra effort, and it is important to remember that the participation of vulnerable groups is about values, not direct benefits. By facilitating the participation of activists with children in events, you help the civil sector to follow the principles that it upholds.

Supporting the participation of people with children in events is a key element of a non-discriminatory policy. To ensure the fair participation of all citizens, it is important to create conditions that enable people with children to fully participate in activist processes. Ignoring their needs and problems, the activist community loses valuable voices and opportunities, as well as professional and competent workers.

**Inclusion is a matter of values, not resources, documents, and management. Ultimately, it is always a matter of values.**

## **Recommendations**

1. Include expenses for childcare in the project budgets. This will allow organizations to eliminate economic barriers and involve parents in activist initiatives.
2. Take into account parental needs during the event planning stage. This ensures that organizations will take their requests into account and create a more inclusive environment.
3. Demand the creation of inclusive conditions for people with children at events. Encourage all grant-receiving organizations to create conditions for parents. This will allow activists with children to participate without limitations.
4. Include people with children in an anti-discrimination policy that ensures inclusiveness and accessibility.

**Supporting the participation of people with children will not only remove barriers but also strengthen the activist community, contributing to inclusivity and resilience in times of crisis.**