



SDMNY JOINS GLOBAL “RIGHT TO DECIDE” NETWORK

We have long acknowledged our debt to colleagues around the world who have been piloting the use of SDM in their own countries, especially those, like Bulgaria, from whom we learned so much when we began in 2016. We’ve shared how SDM not only comes from how everyone makes decisions, but also from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that makes everyone’s right to make their own decisions a human right. Decision-Makers are proud of their own journeys, but also of being part of this world-wide movement.



Michael Bach, Director of IRIS

Now, with assistance from the Open Societies Foundation, the Canadian Institute for Research on Inclusion in Society (IRIS) is creating a platform, Right to Decide, or R2D, that will connect advocates and activists across the globe. The first meeting, held (remotely, of course!) last week was convened by Canadian Michael Bach, Director of IRIS, who was the opening speaker at our first Advisory Council Meeting in 2017, and who has been a valued friend and counselor to SDMNY.

SDMNY Project Director Kris Glen and Site Coordinator Joan Cornachio were invited participants at the very early meeting – held at 6:30 AM New York time– because participants joined from as far away as Australia, where it was 11:30 PM! We were able to re-connect with friends and colleagues from the U.K., Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Israel, Columbia, and Peru, and begin to learn about SDM in Romania, India, South Africa, Mexico and many other parts of the world.

R2D plans monthly Learning Exchanges to explore, in depth, the successes and challenges that advocates are encountering in their own countries. The first, scheduled for March 28, will feature Israel’s pioneering commitment to SDM including legislation that, like that now pending in NY, requires training for supporters. They have also established a Director of SDM in the Israeli Ministry of Justice, Ornit Dan, who visited SDMNY shortly after she was appointed and described our work to be “extremely valuable” in designing the Israeli model.

There is no way to express how useful–and inspiring–these international connections are to the more personal and local work of our Decision-Makers, their supporters and SDMNY facilitators. We are grateful to be included, excited about everything to be learned and shared, as we continue our commitment to the human right of everyone to make their own decisions without regard to disability!

In light of the terrible tragedy unfolding in Ukraine, we send our thoughts and prayers to the people of Ukraine, and hope that those with disabilities are not left behind.