

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

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Disability Advocacy in
EU Decision-Making

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure to introduce this book, which draws on evidence from disability movements and campaigns to reveal how civil society can challenge and change the course of policy making. It draws on extensive and detailed research into the dynamics of disability activism within the European Union (EU) and sheds light on the interplay between social movements and governance structures. The focus is both timely and significant, examining how activists have navigated a changing political landscape to advocate for recognition, rights and legislative change.

It explores how the EU became a key arena for policy engagement with civil society, and for disability advocacy in particular. It shows how disabled people and their organisations advanced their cause through collective action by identifying, and taking advantage of, strategic opportunities. The analysis of campaigns, co-ordinated by the European Disability Forum, reveals the successes and the challenges in influencing EU-level decision-making.

The book offers a nuanced understanding of how formalised advocacy coalitions provide civil society with platforms for new kinds of policy advocacy while sometimes constraining the scope of their more radical claims for social change. In this way, it highlights both the achievements of disability movements and the advocacy constraints of civil society structures that become entwined with institutions of governance.

One of the most impactful contributions of this research was the development of a collective action framework for future campaigns led by disabled people's organisations. This is a testament to the author's commitment to producing research that is not only academically rigorous but also practically valuable for the policy communities with which it engaged.

This is an important book that offers a deeper understanding of the interplay between civil society, social movements and governance. Its insights are relevant not only for scholars and activists within the disability community but for anyone interested in the broader dynamics of social movements and political advocacy.

It has been a pleasure to see this work come to fruition and to have played a role in supporting it. I hope it will be widely read and provide a stimulus for further research and for renewed collective action on disability equality towards a more inclusive society for all.

Mark Priestley
Professor Emeritus, University of Leeds

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