



**Reducing inequality and discrimination is a goal of the 2030 Agenda.** This means tackling not only inequality of income and wealth, but also inequality of opportunity. Everyone should participate in economic progress and social achievements regardless of their income, gender, age, ethnicity, background or religion, and regardless of whether or not they have a disability.

## PARTICIPATING IN LIFE

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

The municipality of Nieder-Olm is in the process of realising its action plan to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It includes a large number of measures designed to enable persons with disabilities to participate in the life of the municipality. At the same time this is designed to raise awareness of their needs among all citizens.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Announcements such as the one concerning basic social security for senior citizens are being made available in 'plain language'. In the town hall the municipality has funded a tactile guidance system for the blind, and in the school has funded a lift. Since 2011, holidays for children with disabilities have also been offered. Measures such as these ensure greater participation in a wide variety of areas across society.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

In 2010 the municipality of Nieder-Olm set up an advisory board for persons with disabilities. A year later, Nieder-Olm was the first municipality of its kind (i.e. an association of towns) in Rhineland-Palatinate to launch an action plan for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities has since increased.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The municipality of Nieder-Olm will evaluate the progress it has made in implementing its action plan at regular intervals. It intends to persuade associations, churches and other organisations to work in partnership with it. The municipality has also applied to the Aktion Mensch association (a voluntary organisation dedicated to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities) to be included in its 'inclusive municipalities' study as a model municipality.



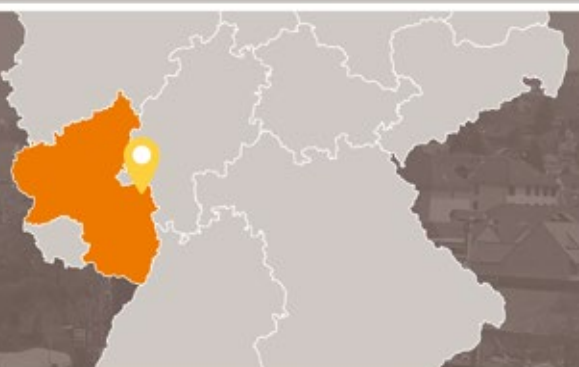
## Nieder-Olm ➔ Rhineland-Palatinate



Population:  
**32,390**



Mayor:  
**Ralph Spiegler**





## PARTICIPATION NEED NOT BE EXPENSIVE

**Reducing inequality and discrimination – to make SDG 10 of the 2030 Agenda a reality, something needs to change in many areas of our society. The municipality of Nieder-Olm is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to participate in the life of society.**

For this purpose in 2010 Nieder-Olm created an advisory board for persons with disabilities. A year later, the municipality was the first of its kind (an association of towns) in Rhineland-Palatinate to launch an action plan for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 'We went on a journey around the municipality with our eyes open', says Ralph Spiegler, mayor of Nieder-Olm. Where are there issues to be addressed? How can we change things? In close consultation with the advisory board for persons with disabilities, the mayor and the responsible professional bodies, targets were defined and a time line was set for implementing the action plan and the tasks it contains.

There are very different areas where greater participation needs to be facilitated. One of the first projects the municipality implemented was the inclusive holiday pass. The holidays offered to schoolchildren were widened in order to include children with disabilities. A great deal has happened in Nieder-Olm over the last few years. A school was equipped with a lift, and the town hall foyer was made fully accessible. Structural measures like these are expensive. Yet the lack of lifts is not the only thing that prevents people with disabilities from participating in everyday life. 'It's often a matter of the small measures that are not so expensive', says Mr Spiegler. In the town hall, for instance, there are now tactile door signs that blind people can read. A number of official announcements have also been made in 'plain language', i.e. language that is easy to read and understand. The workforce of the municipality have been trained in the basics of sign language.

Ralph Spiegler found that everybody can benefit when the needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account. Measures include official letters that are easy to understand, or a guidance system that makes it easier for persons with impaired vision to find their way to the citizens' office. 'More and more people are recognising the fact that it is in everyone's interests', says Mr Spiegler.



At the town hall a tactile guidance system leads people to their destination. (Photo: Verbandsgemeinde Nieder-Olm)

Progress is evaluated at regular intervals. What measures were a success? Where was the plan too ambitious? What can still be done? The municipality has just applied to the Aktion Mensch association (which is dedicated to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities) to be included in its 'inclusive municipalities' study as a model municipality. This study looks at how social spaces can be designed and further developed inclusively.

One of the major tasks is to raise all citizens' awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities. It is important that people with and without disabilities meet and talk to each other face-to-face, so that citizens without disabilities can discover what challenges people with disabilities face in their daily lives. According to Ralph Spiegler, the advisory board for persons with disabilities has made a major contribution here. He explains that the board has done a splendid job of persuading people, drawing their attention to problems and motivating them to eliminate those problems. Associations and churches can support efforts to increase participation. In the municipality of Nieder-Olm the drive to take things further remains: 'We'd like to see the concerns of persons with disabilities being taken into account in all respects whenever measures are being planned, when decisions are being taken and when activities are being implemented, rather like automatically checking the statics when building a house', says Gracia Schade, chair of the advisory board for persons with disabilities.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.vg-nieder-olm.de](http://www.vg-nieder-olm.de)

[www.aktion-mensch.de/kommune-inklusiv](http://www.aktion-mensch.de/kommune-inklusiv)