HiLives: Including and connecting in higher education

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Intellectual Output 3

IO3

Transnational / European good practice guide for Higher Education Institutions, Secondary Schools and Employers, aiming to help young adults with IDD to access Higher Education and to start an independent life.

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Introduction and purpose of the guide

This product is intended to be a **transnational/European guide of good practice and recommendations** for higher education institutions, secondary schools and employers, with the aim of helping young adults with intellectual disabilities to access higher education and to start an independent life. Its elaboration is based on the experiences and ideas of the project partners and the actors involved in the project, not on a desk review approach, which is carried out in other intellectual products of the project, complementary to this guide, and therefore no quotations are used.

It has been developed as an innovative tool: so far, there are no known European best practice guides available in the field of Higher Education for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, being essential to gather efforts for the development of such a resource.

As the last intellectual output of the project, this guide has benefited from the knowledge acquired during the activities developed in the project, such as coordination meetings, teaching and learning activities, meetings and exchanges. It is also closely related to the other intellectual products generated in HiLives, which are: a *Framework for the development of an inclusive curriculum in Higher Education (IO1)* and a *Prototype of a digital tool for connecting and networking opportunities (IO2)*.

This guide is intended to have a pragmatic approach, being especially aimed at those who decide and act in this area: university and school staff, employers and other decision-makers. It is hoped that the guide can be a resource of interest, not only to project participants, but also to other universities, schools and companies. For each of the domains or pillars on which the project has considered, since its initial design, to be fundamental for the development of this type of training initiatives, an analysis is made of possible weaknesses and threats, as well as strengths and opportunities, providing recommendations to facilitate the inclusion of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the University, as well as their employability and inclusion in ordinary companies.

Finally, the guide includes a detailed presentation of the programs developed by the four universities participating in the project, as reference examples. In the paradigmatic case of Spain, the framework for the development of this type of program is presented in a differentiated manner. Finally, the guide includes a brief review of other programs identified at the international level as examples of other good practices.

This guide is complemented by the previous products or intellectual outputs of the project, which can be consulted separately.

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Methodology and structure

The HiLives project, based on the previous knowledge and experiences of the participants, has understood from its initial design that the development of Higher Education initiatives for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is supported by 11 fundamental domains, which are the following:

1. **Inclusive Higher Education and Social Inclusion.**
2. **Transition from High School to Higher Education.**
3. **Transition from Higher Education to the Labour Market/Industry.**
4. **Support to start an independent Life.**
5. **Use of digital media to support successful academic, social and e,mployment experiences.**
6. **Designing and implementing curriculum in HE.**
7. **Admission process and eligibility criteria.**
8. **Hosting protocols and induction programs.**
9. **Person-centered Planning.**
10. **Mentoring.**
11. **Coaching.**

This guide, therefore, has been structured on the basis of the 11 domains that the project proposes as nuclear, which have been subject to analysis, with the aim of providing practical guidance to universities, other educational centers and employers to improve the inclusion and job placement opportunities of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In order to identify aspects that could facilitate the university education of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their subsequent employability, the methodology to be followed was structured in five steps:

1.   Consensual definition, as operational as possible, of each of the domains, with a particular focus on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are eligible for training programs in higher education institutions.

2. Selection of informants from the programs developed in each of the four universities participating in the project with the objective of gathering information on:

   a. - Users/Students.

   b. - Families.

   c. - Secondary and post-secondary schools.

   d. - Higher education institutions.

   e. - Entrepreneurs.

3. Application of SWOT analysis methodology to obtain information from the experience of the agents involved in each domain. This information focuses on the identification of:

   a. INTERNAL FACTORS

      i. - Weaknesses: internal factors of the program that can be identified as disadvantages or negative elements.

      ii. - Strengths: internal factors of the program that can be identified as advantages or positive elements.

   b. EXTERNAL FACTORS:

      i. - Threats: external factors of the context that can be identified as disadvantages or negative elements for the development of the program.

      ii. - Opportunities: external factors of the program that can be identified as advantages or positive elements for the development of the program.

4. Information on the programs developed in the four universities participating in the project. This is complemented on the one hand with information on the experience and results of the programs of the University of Aveiro and University of Salamanca obtained from the working sessions with students of both programs in the visit made to Aveiro by students and professors of the University of Salamanca. On the other hand, the presentation of the development framework of this type of programs in Spain, different from the rest of Europe.

5. Information on other programs external to those of the project partners, as a reference of best practices, obtained by input from the partners during the development of the three products or intellectual outputs.

For the first point, a template was generated and distributed to all partners with the 11 domains, requesting an approximation to an operational definition of each of them and particularized in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities susceptible to access training programs in higher education institutions. Subsequently, all the contributions were analyzed, generating a definition proposal for each domain that was returned to the partners for contributions and consensus, thus closing the process.

For the second point, each university identified 1 or 2 possible informants from each group of agents involved ((Users/Students, families, professionals linked to secondary and post-secondary schools, higher education institutions and entrepreneurs) who were available to be interviewed in the next step.

For the third point, an online interface was configured in which each university, through the Qualtrics platform, could upload the information obtained. This interface allowed, for each domain, to compile the information obtained from all the informants grouped in each of the four SWOT boxes. Subsequently, from a qualitative perspective, the information collected was analyzed to extract relevant aspects and possible recommendations.

For the fourth point, a detailed description of the programs developed by each of the universities was obtained. At the same time, two complementary strategies were carried out. On the one hand, given that Spain is the country in the European context where training programs for people with IDD have been most extensively and solidly implemented in higher education, an in-depth report on this reality was carried out by the team of the University of Salamanca. Complementarily, in the context of the visit and exchange of students with intellectual or developmental disabilities from the University of Salamanca with those of the University of Aveiro, in September 2022, two procedures were developed. On the one hand, a group work session aimed at learning about the students' experiences in three vital areas: housing, employment and leisure/partnership. Regarding each of these topics, the students contributed their views on four questions: How would you like it to be? How is it now? How can the university help you to make it the way you want it to be? How can your family help you to make it the way you want it to be? The objective of this activity, in addition to learning

how university programs and the immediate context can facilitate the inclusion and employability of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, was to continue working on a key component of this type of program: self-determination. On the other hand, two group interviews focused on **proposals for program improvement**. Specifically, they focused on four aspects: (1) program contents: programming, activities, internship period and teachers, (2) supports and facilitators encountered, (3) barriers in daily life and (4) labor repercussion.

Finally, for the fifth point, a template was sent to all project partners to identify other international best practices with brief information on each.

Analysis of weaknesses and threats, strengths and opportunities, with recommendations for each of the 11 domains.

DOMAIN 1: Inclusive Higher Education and Social Inclusion

Programs and actions aimed at people with disabilities, within the university environment, so that they can exercise their right to access and participate in regular higher education, providing them with opportunities for full social participation in the different areas of adult life, such as employment, leisure and independent living.

These programs and actions are developed based on principles of universal accessibility with the elimination of barriers and universal design for learning, but include the necessary adaptations for each person in terms of methodologies, rhythms and formats, based on their interests and capabilities.

When we focus on intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), these programs and actions take the form of curricula in different formats, whether they are curricula specifically designed for students with IDD, existing curricula aimed at all students, or hybrid curricula (combining the two previous modalities), which are aimed at promoting socialization, employment opportunities and independent living. In any case, they are based on the interests, abilities and strengths of each student. They have an eminently practical approach to the development of skills, and frequently use cooperative learning models, experiences in real contexts, flexible groups, support of students with and without disabilities, and mentoring or tutoring with teachers. Typically, programs for people with intellectual disabilities culminate in practical employment experiences in the community in the form of supported employment (perhaps a brief explanation of what supported employment is could be included).

SWOT Analysis

Regarding the information obtained about the domain focused on **inclusive higher education and social inclusion**, the informants coincide in pointing out the following aspects related to the areas proposed in the SWOT analysis:

As for the **weaknesses** at the internal level, taking as a reference the main university programs in each university, the informants (mainly professionals: teachers, companies, etc.) point out three aspects that could be improved: the attitudes of the environment, the difficulty of implementing truly inclusive programs and the adequacy of the contents. Thus, they point out, firstly, that on many occasions there are many preconceived ideas about intellectual disabilities, as well as certain prejudices that will have a direct impact on the actions and attitudes that the environment will have towards people with intellectual disabilities. In addition, they point out that society is still far from social inclusion, as it happens in educational inclusion, although in this matter more progress has been made, in fact, most of the informants agree that it is essential to conceive education as a key factor for social inclusion. An opinion shared by most of the participants in these programs is that they are made up exclusively of people with disabilities, which leads more towards integration than inclusion.

As for factors related to program content, most informants point out that not all higher education programs are generally adapted to students' needs and individual learning trajectories. Access to these types of training opportunities is therefore not easy, and there is not an adequate and sufficiently wide range of training on offer.

On the other hand, in terms of threats, the informants highlight the lack of funding and opportunities and the difficulties of access to the labor market. Thus, the vast majority agree that the administrative area constitutes one of the main aspects that jeopardize this type of program. Although the universal right of access to education is continually advocated as part of the principle of equal opportunities, most of the informants agree that truly inclusive educational opportunities do not exist at the moment; either due to a lack of adaptation in the existing training offer, or due to the scarce funding of this type of programs, an aspect on which the informants place special emphasis, placing

funding as one of the threatening points of the environment and which conditions the future of this type of training programs.

All professionals who have participated in the analysis point to the high demands of the labor market, a market that does not promote job opportunities grow for people with intellectual disabilities, not even in terms of extending contracts beyond the internship period. This aspect is closely related to the lack of knowledge that society has about people with disabilities, going back to welfare models that were left behind long ago and paying more attention to the weaknesses of people than to their strengths. There is no adequate training on disability issues, so that there is no knowledge or approach on the part of non-disabled peers, going back to a society that does not favor real social inclusion, no matter how much it promotes it.

The **strengths** highlighted in the domain of educational inclusion and social inclusion are mainly based on social skills that enable the development of social skills, interaction with peers and inclusion in the university community. Most informants point out that the presence of people with intellectual disabilities in the university environment, regardless of their abilities and characteristics, is one of the most outstanding aspects, since this is the only way to promote true inclusion. On the other hand, and although it was pointed out as a weakness that some of these programs were only integrated by students with disabilities, they point out that sharing classrooms with classmates who also have disabilities allows the formation of a stronger support network, in addition to the network that is generated with the professionals who teach the program.

In addition, although less represented in the responses, it is pointed out that these programs allow students to get a closer look at the reality they will have to face when trying to enter the labor market. On the other hand, this type of program generates a significant increase in personal autonomy, self-esteem, self-determination, quality of life and both academic and labor competencies.

Finally, when it comes to the **opportunities** generated by participation in such programs for social and educational inclusion, virtually all informants agree on the importance of the same in terms of awareness and visibility of the group. In addition, the families and support networks of the person will discover aspects they did not know about their

relatives, which will have a positive impact on the person with intellectual disabilities. In short, all agree that this type of program is an important way not only for access to higher education but also for the social and labor inclusion of people with disabilities.

Recommendations to promote "Inclusive higher education and social inclusion".

The programs implemented should avoid being internally limited in their design and development by inadequate social expectations regarding people with disabilities. Ignorance, prejudices and preconceived ideas about the capabilities of people with disabilities have an impact on the inclusion of people with disabilities both socially and educationally; therefore, it is important to advocate for the training and awareness of society, in this case the university environment, on disability issues. On the other hand, taking into account the main objective of developing truly inclusive programs in higher education, we highlight the importance of creating heterogeneous groups, so that the university becomes a social space for meeting and training.

Externally, we must not let the lack of training opportunities in higher education limit the access of potential students to university programs whose contents are accessible and attractive to people with disabilities, as well as generate solid networks of support and work with the labor market to promote the training and hiring of people with disabilities in companies, something that currently does not happen.

Undoubtedly, we can rely on aspects that strengthen the social reality about inclusion, such as the positive impact generated by the presence of people with disabilities in university environments, an aspect that enriches the institution and all members of the same while generating truly inclusive opportunities. The development of this type of programs, raises an approach to the reality of the social and labor context that students will find when they leave the program, so that they reach the end of their studies with a higher level of confidence, autonomy and predisposition to enter the working world.

The consolidation of this type of initiatives will be achieved by taking advantage of the opportunities that arise, externally, to achieve true inclusion in three areas: social, educational and labor. These types of programs have a positive impact on the person with a disability and also on his or her environment, as they become a point of support

for families who rediscover all the achievements that the person with a disability can attain, thus indirectly strengthening support networks.

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DOMAIN 2: Transition from High School to Higher Education

Higher education has long been considered not a plausible option for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This has resulted in people with IDD themselves being unaware of the possibility of accessing university, and the absence of transition plans that, sufficiently in advance, prepare them for it. This denial of the right to higher education is accentuated by the fact that many students with intellectual disabilities are not eligible for a high school diploma (a requirement for university entrance), having had curricular adaptations during their secondary school studies. To ensure the right to higher education, it will be important for secondary schools to develop plans for transition to a possible university setting well in advance if access to university is an important goal for the person with a disability. Providing information about university access to students with DID is also the responsibility of professionals in previous educational stages, as well as putting in place mechanisms that facilitate their entry into the university world, including obtaining a high school diploma that facilitates subsequent access. These transition plans should take into account the wishes and interests of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and should consider aspects such as the accessibility of the university context, how the needs of the student with a disability can be met there, what supports will be available in the new context, and how natural supports (i.e., other students), organizations, and family members will be involved in the transition process.

SWOT Analysis

With regard to the collection of information on the domain focused on the **transition from compulsory education or secondary education to higher education**, the following aspects were selected and highlighted in the SWOT analysis.

Regarding the **weaknesses** detected by the informants interviewed, at a general level, the majority of informants point out that the transition plans from secondary to higher education are not fully developed or are not even implemented in most cases.

From secondary education, different informants indicate the lack of information about future opportunities after finishing this stage, added to the reduced time to make decisions. Another relevant aspect is the training of teachers, who must improve their preparation to achieve a correct adaptation of the learning methods and support that people with disabilities require to obtain the degree that will allow them to access higher education.

The inclusion that is said to be established is not entirely real. Some informants point out that the number of people with disabilities who have access to higher education studies is reduced, so that very heterogeneous groups are created in which they cannot be provided with all the necessary support. In addition to this, segregation begins to occur little by little and separation is produced according to people's abilities.

When accessing higher education, some informants determine that the supports they need disappear or do not fulfill the function that applicants require. In addition, all higher education degrees require a high school diploma, which decreases the chances of access for many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, whose studies do not reach those educational levels.

One of the most noteworthy comments is that one of the main **threats** is the limited number of options to choose from to achieve this transition, together with the lack of funds, which means that the programs are limited in all senses of the word.

Several informants point to a shortage of higher education teaching staff with the necessary skills to provide the necessary support to students, in addition to adequately imparting the knowledge that students need for the development of a higher education degree.

On the other hand, families, especially, also point out that society poses a great threat, since the vision it has of the group, regarding their ability to obtain the degrees they desire, is very negative, considering them incapable of achieving their goals.

Regarding the **strengths** detected, several informants point out that transition programs allow people with intellectual and developmental disabilities the possibility of accessing higher education, after adaptation and preparation for their future training, either to

continue their studies, or to be trained without a previous qualification such as a primary or secondary education degree. These opportunities represent a high level of motivation and therefore an increase in self-esteem for the group.

All agree that having the possibility of accessing the university implies a personal and social growth, allows the awareness of personal capabilities, in addition to showing the environment their skills. In addition, natural supports such as family and friends play an important role in the transition period and are of great importance in the process.

Finally, regarding the **opportunities** detected, most of the informants agree that through these programs it is possible to show society the capabilities of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Students demonstrate that they can obtain advanced degrees that facilitate the acquisition of skills and competencies that, in the future, will allow them to develop a job. Through the development of appropriate transition plans, we get students to investigate what their interests are, and in this way they can determine what their academic and professional future will be.

Recommendations to promote the " Transition from High School to Higher Education".

It is necessary to overcome internal weaknesses with respect to plans for transition to higher education, which are sometimes non-existent, sometimes poorly developed or simply not put into practice. In addition, real, objective and quality information must be provided about future possibilities after the end of compulsory schooling in order to advocate for the right of access to higher education for everyone. Working on these plans is key, since only a very small number of people with disabilities access higher education programs, and when they do, they sometimes do so in specific training programs for them, which can sometimes give a false idea of integration rather than inclusion.

We must prevent external threats that may arise in parallel, mainly in terms of the limited training options offered to students. Again we emphasize that the training options are poor in terms of supply and possibilities, which causes most people with intellectual disabilities finish their training at the stage of basic compulsory schooling, often without obtaining a degree, and choose to continue in other programs generally linked to third sector entities, rather than assess alternatives for university education.

We will be able to project ourselves forward effectively if we rely on opportunities that access to university generates for people with disabilities, such as the fact that access to a university education degree is a great opportunity for growth both at a personal and social level for people with intellectual disabilities. In addition, people who have the opportunity to access higher education studies and obtain a degree show higher levels of motivation and self-esteem.

We must not miss the opportunity to use these types of transition plans as tools to show society the capabilities of people with disabilities, break down barriers and break down prejudices. In addition, being able to choose between a wide range of training and continuing with a more specific training makes students show higher levels of self-determination by being able to choose and decide on their own future.

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DOMAIN 3: Transition from Higher Education to the Labor Market/Industry

Process in which university students acquire not only training, but also skills and experiences that favor access to the labor market. In students with disabilities, it usually occurs with the support of mediators such as organizations or specialized services that provide support in the search for and access to employment. In this process, it is important to develop actions to raise awareness in society and the labor market regarding the right to work of this group, the importance of their being active subjects and the skills they show.

For students with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) in the transition processes from higher education to the labor market, some aspects are of particular importance. Processes should be developed as much as possible through person-centered planning so that the student can make his or her own decisions, connecting institutions of higher education with service provider organizations and employers. It is important to provide opportunities for employment experiences in the community, using the necessary supports, so that individuals have experiences that assist in decision making and the search for potential jobs. These should be based on the expectations and interests of IDDPs. It is important for the student to develop a portfolio of skills, competencies, and experiences acquired in the training process, in addition to academic knowledge. The objective of this transition process is to make the student aware of what a job means, to make society and employers aware, to provide real opportunities, and to value the capabilities of IDDPs.

SWOT Analysis

Regarding the collection of information on the domain focused on the **transition from higher education to the labor market**, the following aspects have been highlighted in the SWOT analysis:

Regarding the **weaknesses** found by the participants in the present study, a very significant part of the informants point out that the labor market is still a closed area in terms of accessibility for people with ID. There is not enough knowledge on the part of

the companies of the type of procedures that must be carried out to initiate the hiring of people with disabilities, and some informants point out that it may be due to lack of initiative and involvement on the part of the companies while others believe that it is due to lack of knowledge.

Linked to this aspect, several informants also point out the shortage of support staff to accompany the person with ID also during the process after the start of the hiring process, a figure that should be taken into account more in order to promote an increase in contracts to people with ID.

On the other hand, they point out the expectations regarding the type of work. Not all companies allow adapting the job position and tasks to the skills and interests of people with ID.

On the other hand, family members and professionals agree that the environment may present some **threatening** factors for the development of this type of programs, such as, for example, the lack of support in the legislative field, the lack of information from the administrations, financing, among other aspects, are pointed out by the informants. In addition, closely linked to the previous aspects, the short duration of employment contracts, if any, or their limitation to an internship modality, again generate ignorance and lack of initiative and therefore a shortage of opportunities in a closed labor market.

As for the **strengths** pointed out by the participants, we find that most of the informants agree that one of the main strengths is the high level of skills acquired by people with ID during the training period, since the programs have extensive training and support at the academic level and access to the labor market. Most of the weight is carried by the extensive and detailed theoretical and practical information, since it generates in the person an important level of confidence, which in turn will be transmitted to the labor market. In addition, having an employment experience with support prior to the subsequent ones they will experience without support is a fundamental point.

One of the informants pointed out a fact that is very interesting in our opinion, and that is the increase in hiring possibilities experienced after having completed higher education.

On the other hand, one of the aspects that in our opinion is fundamental is the great increase in the levels of autonomy, self-esteem, self-concept, confidence and social skills experienced by people with ID after having had work experiences.

Finally, regarding the **opportunities** that the environment offers to promote the development of this type of programs, we find that one of the comments repeated on a greater number of occasions by the informants is that giving people with ID the opportunity to see themselves in a job, in a real community context, not only promotes the exercise of the right to work but also enhances once again the acquisition of tools so that a great increase in their autonomy and self-esteem can be generated. Getting to know the labor market, through this type of experiences that these programs allow, means enriching the person and ensuring that this confidence is transmitted later on when looking for a paid job independently.

Closely linked to this issue, as raised by some informants, hiring a person with ID means diversifying companies and making employers aware of the capabilities of people with ID in such a way that we will again be contributing to breaking down numerous prejudices that still exist in society.

Recommendations to favor the " Transition from Higher Education to the Labor Market/Industry".

One aspect that may limit this type of program is the number of support staff accompanying students throughout the teaching process, and it is necessary for students to have a person to turn to in case they need it.

Lack of disability awareness is a clear threat to our training models. It is something that has a negative impact when it comes to hiring people outside the traineeship period. In this sense, it is urgent to implement external information and awareness-raising strategies that generate initiative on the part of the labor market to incorporate people with disabilities into their companies. The scale of incorporation of people with intellectual disabilities into the labor market has much to do with the low expectations of companies regarding the types of work they can perform, something linked to the

lack of contact with this group and prejudices about it. In addition, in general, there is still little support from the State, and there is also little legislative and financial support for hiring people with disabilities, not to mention that many companies are unaware of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

We will be able to address the above by making our programs and our students strong, relying on the high level of competencies that they acquire during the course and that will provide them with high levels of competitiveness in their day-to-day work. Our students receive specialized training in a wide range of areas, as well as support in the development of basic life skills, which is why we can affirm that their chances of employment increase after studying higher education.

We must not miss the opportunity to diversify the companies we reach, so that we achieve a truly inclusive labor market, as well as the opportunity for students to see themselves during their internship period in a real work context that provides them with the necessary tools to be able to perform their work autonomously and efficiently.

DOMAIN 4: Support to start an independent Life

Support is considered to be those resources, material, human or of any other type, that help the person with a disability to develop self-determination and empowerment.

Self-determination includes skills related to self-advocacy, self-awareness, problem solving, goal setting and decision making. The concept of empowerment proposes the implementation of interventions to enable people to maintain or acquire a sense of control over important aspects of their lives, as the result of their own efforts to achieve goals. In this sense empowerment is a process in which the family and young people become more competent and capable of mobilizing resources that can positively influence the ability to meet their needs, thus promoting a sense of control over important aspects of their functioning.

Supports include income, adequate housing, a network of people (paid or unpaid), personal assistance adapted to needs, mediation, training/awareness-raising programs of the structures directed to or where people with disabilities are located (their own, families, employers and services), as well as post-secondary education courses or training programs. In general, they favor quality of life in the field of autonomy, socialization, personal development, self-esteem, self-concept, etc., and an increase in the development of their capabilities, both quantitative and qualitative.

SWOT Analysis

Regarding the information obtained about the domain focused on **support for initiating independent living**, the informants coincide in pointing out the following aspects related to the areas proposed in the SWOT analysis.

As for the area of **weaknesses**, in this particular domain, several informants agree that there is sometimes a lack of adequate support to promote true independence. On the other hand, they stress with equal relevance an opposite issue: people may perceive excessive support leading towards an almost exclusivity treatment that may end up moving away from the model of promoting social inclusion advocated by today's society.

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One informant questions the extent to which obtaining a university degree fosters independence if the labor market is not fully aware of the need to start hiring and promote autonomy and economic independence in order to begin independent living.

This type of program does not focus, for example, on supporting the right of people to live independently and in community; for example, the change of residence to supervised housing, among other issues. Something that the University, either from the promotion itself, or from the financial field, should support.

On the other hand, in terms of the **threats** detected, all the informants who have commented coincide on the same issues. In the first place, they give special relevance to the lack of financing for access to independent housing.

On the other hand, they point out that to promote true independence, it is also necessary to work with families, which is sometimes difficult because they tend to continue overprotecting their children.

Again, several informants again emphasize society's lack of knowledge and prejudices about people with intellectual disabilities and how this can translate into a lack of support to promote independence.

The impact of covid19 has been an important consideration in these matters, as it has limited opportunities for independent living in pandemic and post-pandemic times.

On the other hand, it seems to us particularly important to emphasize something that the informants have once again highlighted: until we achieve full accessibility, not only physically but also cognitively, we will not be able to ensure that people with disabilities achieve full independence.

Regarding the **strengths** detected by the informants and that promote the start of independent living by people with disabilities, the main one is the experience of studying higher education on the university campus where there are constant opportunities to test the various daily living skills that are worked on from the training itself. It also highlights the role that training plays in enabling people to start an independent life with greater autonomy after learning and implementing with support different skills that are gradually being automated by the person so that he/she becomes quite autonomous.

These programs introduce the learning of transversal competencies that students can put into practice in their daily lives.

The support of the training program team staff, as well as mentors (non-disabled peers who support the trainees in tasks where they require support) is essential.

Regarding the **opportunities** detected in this domain, it is generally agreed that it is the environment itself that allows people with disabilities to put into practice everything they have learned in training to achieve independent living. Society collaborates in this by allowing them to carry out activities on their own, but providing help whenever they need it.

This type of program is a great opportunity for families, as they discover unknown capabilities, as well as helping them to become more independent.

Recommendations to promote " Support to start an independent Life".

Available resources can be internally limiting when it comes to providing the necessary supports to promote the personal independence that we advocate for in our programs. We propose as a strategy to implement an individualized support plan, which entails getting to know each of the students in order to determine their abilities and needs in order to be able to provide the appropriate supports at each moment.

On the other hand, from this type of program, the self-determination of all students should be encouraged, so that they can exercise their right to live independently and in the community.

Along the same lines, the scarcity of funding and resources to promote students' self-determination and their right to live independently and in the community will always pose a threat, since one of the points that informants have expressed as a weakness of the programs is the lack of support in this type of aspect.

A way of financing or creating synergies should be sought, so that the universities themselves can support this type of initiative. In many cases, it is not only the lack of funding that is a threat, but also the families themselves show resistance to promoting

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independent living for their children. On the other hand, there are still many deficits in terms of both physical and cognitive accessibility, a point that can hinder the true independence of people with disabilities.

Undoubtedly, the university experience itself is a strong element of our programs on which to rely, as it provides high levels of confidence, self-determination and therefore has a positive impact on increasing personal autonomy in order to start independent living. The course itself constantly introduces cross-cutting experiences or situations that foster the acquisition of skills required for day-to-day activities.

Finally, we have to see the environment in which we develop our programs as a range of opportunities and not barriers, which can allow us to put into practice everything we have learned due to the good reception of this type of programs. Society is becoming more and more aware of the need to promote true social inclusion, which is an essential and very necessary support to promote independence.

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DOMAIN 5: Use of digital media to support successful academic, social and employment experiences

Digital resources offer endless opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to access information in more accessible formats, participate in social, educational, occupational and cultural activities. Access to and training on these tools and resources in a hyper-connected world is crucial to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities.

In order for them to be truly useful and constitute an opportunity and not a barrier, training in their use (including training on their possible risks), ensuring their availability, as well as guaranteeing their accessibility, adapting their characteristics to the needs of students with disabilities, should be promoted. Technology also constitutes an opportunity to create specific support tools for people with IDD (e.g., alternative and augmentative communication systems). When considering the use or design of a technological or digital solution to meet the needs of a student with a disability, it is necessary to involve the student in its design.

SWOT Analysis

Regarding the information obtained about the domain focused on the **use of digital media to support successful academic, social and employment experiences,** the informants coincide in pointing out the following aspects related to the areas proposed in the SWOT analysis.

As for the **weaknesses** detected in this domain, the presence of digital media in all environments is currently normalized, as well as the ability and skill to handle them, but the reality is that not all people have sufficient means, the necessary skills for proper use or the time needed to learn the knowledge related to the media and their operation.

The majority of the informants point out that educational programs do not have enough time to impart all the knowledge that they would like to teach students, resulting in basic knowledge about the use of technologies.

Some informants agree on the inaccessibility and complication of some programs, which are not adapted to all people, and linked to this is the need to increase training about the programs they will need throughout their lives.

In addition, the informants have pointed out some interesting **threatening factors** such as the great dependence that the use of these media can generate in the users of these supports, decreasing direct social contact such as going out with friends, or reducing social skills causing a worsening of communication with others; this has been a very repeated comment. Although learning to use these digital media generates the confidence to navigate the network, sometimes this can lead to dangerous situations because there are people who seek to harass, deceive or defraud others in this virtual context, without people with intellectual disabilities are aware of it.

The **strengths** detected are based on how these programs provide them with the digital skills and abilities necessary to make good use of technological media, with which they expand their knowledge and possibilities for their future employment. They also receive the necessary support so that the digital media facilitate the acquisition of the knowledge required throughout the training.

Active participation in the social environment is also highlighted, since students are connected through social networks to their closest environment, having the possibility of interacting with other people. Take advantage of the opportunity for students to be in contact with their classmates or teachers in case of doubts.

There are many occasions in which this knowledge generates confidence, empowerment and autonomy in people, reducing the chances of suffering possible cybercrime.

The informants point out the following **opportunities** with respect to the use of digital media: most informants agree that knowing skills related to new technologies increases the possibility of finding a job that fits the person's tastes. Currently, digital media are found in all areas, and knowing how to use them is essential. Internet and web pages offer a great opportunity to publicize the situation of people with intellectual disabilities,

in addition to showing others the capabilities they present and which are sometimes not considered because of the disability.

Recommendations to promote the "Use of digital media to support successful academic, social and employment experiences".

An important point that should not be allowed to weaken the functioning of the programs is the technological aspect, especially taking into account that sometimes not all students and their families will have the optimal digital media or will have sufficient capacity and skill in its handling. One possibility to remedy this weakness is the loan of a Tablet to each student at the beginning of the course so that they can work with it outside the classroom as well. In addition, in terms of accessibility, not all current technological programs and applications are accessible, something that affects not only people with disabilities but also a large part of the population, which is an aspect on which we place special emphasis. We must promote cognitive accessibility so that all people, regardless of whether or not they have a disability, can benefit from the advantages generated in today's society by the use of digital media at a personal, work and social level.

In addition to providing the necessary training to promote the use of digital media, we must also be concerned about promoting safety on the networks, as they can become a threat to people with less digital media skills. It can also become a threat the dependence that can create the management of digital resources, since in today's society virtually everything that can be done in the real world can be done virtually.

Overcoming these difficulties can be done by relying on the strength of the use of information and communication technologies to increase the level of personal autonomy, since it allows students to acquire the necessary skills to move in an increasingly connected society.

All this will provide us with opportunities, mainly in the labor field, since there are many options for finding and obtaining employment that arise through the network. In addition, the Internet is currently the most powerful medium to launch information so

that it can serve as an open window to know the true capabilities of people with disabilities, as well as to publicize the current situation of the same with the main objective of generating positive changes to achieve the true inclusion of people with disabilities.

DOMAIN 6: Designing and implementing curriculum in Higher Education

Curricula in higher education for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities should be related to ethics, attitudes, values and well-being, as well as include objectives related to the improvement of competencies, skills and tools necessary to have and maintain employment.

They should be flexible and adapted programs, where the interests and objectives of the students will motivate the choice of curricular units. They should include, in addition to subjects or courses, the development of a support network.

The methodology will be through inclusive pedagogies, universal design for learning, and active learning, and include training in real work situations through internships, which must cover at least half of the time of the last year of studies. Including training in real work situations where the internship will take place, at least half of the time of the last year of studies.

Have a system of evaluation, as well as ongoing support and follow-up, to assess whether the experience is providing a sense of belonging, personal fulfillment and dignity, contributing to improving the quality of life of the students. The teachers and collaborators of the learning experience must be qualified and trained.

The curriculum should contain a summary of the subject matter and the (sub)objectives to be achieved. The curriculum calls for a holistic, student-centered, program-centered model emphasizing four areas: (1) Inclusive Student Life, (2) Person-Centered Planning and Academic Enrichment, (3) Professional Development and Inclusive Practices, and (4) Post-Program Support. The foundation of these four areas involves dynamic and collaborative interactions with the student, family, and community.

SWOT Analysis

Regarding the information obtained about the domain focused on the **design and implementation of a curriculum in higher education**, the informants coincide in pointing out the following aspects related to the areas proposed in the SWOT analysis.

As for **weaknesses**, we find that, regarding the actual design of the educational curriculum in higher education for students with ID, most informants agree that this type of programs should have a longer duration, as well as some subjects and curricular units should be more extensive, since some informants agree that some scientific areas are missing.

In addition, these types of programs are often a last educational step for people with ID, so it would be interesting if they could be expanded. Only two informants have pointed out an aspect that seems interesting, the challenge of carrying out an adequate and fair evaluation of each student at the end of their academic studies.

It has also been pointed out by several informants, that sometimes the staff in charge of teaching the sessions is not sufficiently aware or trained in disability issues, so that sometimes it is difficult for students to keep up with the pace in some subjects where they find themselves with lack of adaptation in terms of universal design for learning.

On the other hand, the main **threats** that informants detect in the environment and that can generate deficiencies when developing such programs are the following: a comment repeated by most informants is the scarcity of options available at the higher education level; in addition, it is not easy to access other types of higher education outside this type of offer and the rest of the programs have not only a much more restricted access but also a null level of adaptation both by the higher organizations and by some trainers. It is also a generalized opinion on the part of the majority of informants that most university personnel are not accustomed to dealing with people with ID; more didactic and pedagogical training is needed.

Regarding the **strengths** that have been highlighted in this domain, all informants have coincided in pointing out the adaptation of both theoretical and practical contents and individualized support as the most important point in this type of university studies for

people with ID. It is a matter of ensuring that the contents of this type of programs are attractive to students and focus on their skills, interests and motivations in order to promote inclusion, autonomy, universal rights, self-esteem, independent living skills, social skills.

In addition, several informants recall a premise that seems important to us as it is one of the starting points of this project: the possibility of pursuing this type of studies at the university motivates students to continue their education.

An important point, on which again a significant number of informants agree, is the coexistence of students with and without disabilities in classrooms and the general university space, and this participation in higher education institutions can be used to raise awareness in the university community and break down barriers and prejudices about people with IDD, so that they become active subjects of support so that they become active subjects during their university studies.

To conclude the information analyzed in this domain, focusing on the last point of the SWOT analysis, one of the main **opportunities** pointed out by the informants, in terms of the external factors surrounding this type of program, is the awareness and involvement of the labor market thanks to the relationship established during the curricular internship periods with this type of program; this is a way of opening up the labor market to people with disabilities, breaking down prejudices and raising awareness in the community in general. In addition, as some informants point out, the university community, both students and professors and other staff, also benefit in terms of learning and participation by sharing spaces and time with the users of this type of program.

On the other hand, some informants point out the benefits they can bring to the families and close environment of other people with disabilities, for example in terms of lowering the level of overprotection, or discovering skills that they would not have considered before about their children or relatives.

Recommendations for the " Designing and implementing curriculum in Higher Education".

It is important to focus on overcoming weaknesses in the internal design and internal curriculum of the programs. In order for learning to be truly significant, the general opinion has been that the duration is short; extensions in time should be considered so that all aspects of the educational curriculum can be worked on effectively and knowledge can be consolidated. In addition, taking into account that this is sometimes the last step in training for people with disabilities, we must ensure that the contents are properly worked on and adapted. Closely linked to the aspects of timing of studies, there is a lack of training in disability issues that teachers sometimes show, so that the teaching-learning process will be difficult because sometimes they do not know how to make the necessary adaptations or simply how to deal with this type of students.

The scarce accessible training offer currently available for people with disabilities, especially in higher education, is a clear threat to the promotion of access of people with intellectual disabilities to higher education institutions. In addition, on many occasions, the training offered has difficulties or limitations in its access, so that we are still facing very restricted access training for people with disabilities.

A strong element in these programs is the adaptation of content, the support provided, the motivation given to students, etc., which is a fundamental pillar in motivating students to continue with their studies or to enter the labor market. In addition, the presence of people with different abilities in higher education institutions contributes not only to diversify classrooms and the university environment, but also to raise society's awareness of educational inclusion.

We should not miss the opportunities offered by the immediate environment, such as the involvement of the labor market. Bonds are created when it comes to educational internships that should not be broken, as the benefits will be mutual for both companies and our students. On the other hand, sharing spaces and time with people with different abilities, as we said before, contributes to raising awareness in society. Finally, as for the impact on the family nucleus, this is very positive because the families will promote the independence and autonomy of the person, encouraging him/her to continue training

or to start his/her professional career, as well as generally reducing the levels of overprotection acquired on many occasions in the family nucleus and which have a negative impact on the day-to-day life of people with disabilities.

DOMAIN 7: Admission process and eligibility criteria

Access to higher education should occur as a matter of right for any citizen who so desires. As far as people with disabilities are concerned, this right must be guaranteed by having accessible admission processes in terms of materials and procedures. It will be essential to have support services and personnel that can make up for the limitations of the procedures, so that they can be accessible to any person with a disability. It is also important to offer accessible services of the institution (canteens, residences and others) that frame the training activity. Beyond the higher education work, in the facet of university extension and its presence in society, the University can provide opportunities for participation in training experiences not oriented to university degrees, giving opportunities to all people.

With regard to people with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (PIDD), it is especially relevant to eliminate some traditional access requirements, such as training or previous level. The access interview with the person and his/her family becomes important, in order to adequately assess the capabilities, needs and interests of the person and advise him/her appropriately. It is also essential that the materials, forms, web and other materials are available in easy-to-read formats, in order to favor cognitive accessibility.

SWOT Analysis

Regarding the information obtained about the domain focused on the **admission process and access criteria**, the informants coincide in pointing out the following aspects related to the areas proposed in the SWOT analysis.

Several informants agree that a **weakness** in the implementation of this type of program is the small number of vacancies despite the existence of a large number of applications.

Another limitation highlighted by several of the informants is the existence of a maximum age for entry. Adults who, for various reasons, have not been able to access training with degrees, lose a great possibility for future employment.

On the other hand, the general lack of awareness about the importance of higher education for people with IDD has been pointed out as a threat. A field that receives little funding, little attention and little acceptance in society.

Regarding the **strengths** detected, at a general level, the informants agreed that participation in these programs means an improvement in the quality of life for the people who access them. In addition, regarding the criteria for access, these are accessible courses that also have, during the access procedures with accompaniment for enrollment, with a previous interview to meet the tutors and an objective evaluation is carried out.

The informants coincide in pointing out that, fundamentally, the greatest **opportunity** offered by these programs is related to the student's environment, since after the training they will improve their relationship with it, as well as their day-to-day management; in addition, they are made aware of their ability to access and pass the degree, achieving the goals they set for themselves.

Recommendations for the " Admission process and eligibility criteria".

As for the internal aspects to which we must pay special attention in order to overcome possible weaknesses of the programs, there is the reduced number of places offered, since we are seeing an increasing number of applications to participate in these programs and it is important to be able to accommodate all those who want to participate in this undoubtedly very significant experience. In addition, if we consider the age criterion, we must also pay special attention to the profile of the students we receive, since the main objective of our programs is that no one is left out. Therefore, we must offer alternatives for people who, due to their older age, cannot access this type of program or do not want to, for example, by offering a similar alternative but more appropriate in terms of content.

On the other hand, we must prevent threatening factors that can wreak havoc in the implementation of our programs. For example, the funding factor continues to be an aspect to which special attention must be paid, since inclusive higher education

continues to be a little-known field and therefore to which little attention is paid, and consequently there is little funding for this type of program.

A strong element, which we must continue to favor, will be the great accessibility and support provided in this type of courses. From the first moment, there is a constant accompaniment and follow-up of the process, which not only generates confidence in the families, but also promotes a rapprochement from the first contact between professionals and new students.

Likewise, we will consolidate all these aspects by taking advantage of all those opportunities that the environment will offer us to improve the social relations of people with disabilities so that they show society their abilities to achieve the goals they set for themselves and to be able to break down barriers in access to higher education, the main objective of this research.

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DOMAIN 8: Hosting protocols and introduction programs

Higher Education programs must provide support resources that facilitate access and participation of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in college.

These resources should be made known to the student before entering the university, facilitating structural accessibility (cognitive, relational and physical) and be available during their stay in the university context. Among these resources we could include: peer support programs, welcome and welcome programs, financial support programs to cover study expenses, or open days that provide the opportunity to get to know the university environment beforehand.

Likewise, information should be provided, in accessible formats, about what is involved in accessing the University, highlighting both the rights and duties of the student, as well as support resources in which to resolve practical issues (e.g., bureaucracy related to enrollment), content (e.g., methodologies to be implemented in classes to facilitate access to information), or social (e.g., social activities carried out in the university context in which other students participate).

SWOT Analysis

With regard to the collection of information on the domain focused on **foster care protocols and programs for introduction to the institution**, the following aspects have been highlighted in the SWOT analysis:

Regarding possible **weaknesses** detected as a result of the analysis of the informants' comments, several people agree that, in spite of the assistance offered, there is still a lack of support to be provided. In addition, regarding the reception in this type of program, there is still a lack of support to be provided, and most of the students who begin to take part in this type of program are coming to the institution for the first time. There are few opportunities to learn about the world of higher education for people with disabilities and, above all, much information needs to be more accessible, especially information about the programs so that they can be disseminated and reach families.

It is especially interesting the comment made by several informants about the possible meetings and previous encounters that can take place between students, since many students come on the first day of the course without knowing their classmates, something that can generate stress and anxiety in the students.

Several informants also pointed out that it would not be superfluous to have a specific figure to support and accompany them through the application process, administrative procedures, etc.; in this way, families would know who to turn to in case of doubts.

Something that has not been especially pointed out, but which we consider important, is that interaction between students with and without disabilities is encouraged from the beginning of the academic journey and beyond the mentoring programs.

Another weak point highlighted refers to the inequalities that may arise if the student has to travel a long distance to attend this type of program.

The informants have hardly commented on possible external factors that could be a **threat to the** development of this type of program. One of the comments that have been collected is the lack of knowledge in society about education and disability, especially at the higher education level.

Economic aspects, for example, the cost of enrollment or the lack of information, have also been pointed out as a possible factor that may affect the development of these programs.

Practically all the informants agree that the **main strength is** the welcoming system. Peer support from the beginning of the course is fundamental, taking into account that students find themselves in a new, totally unknown situation that can generate stress. Furthermore, they point out that the professionals are especially involved so that this is carried out in such a way that the students feel comfortable and safe.

Several informants also point out an important point, such as the initial interview with families and students so that professionals and those responsible for the programs get to know the new students and can get an idea of the type of support they will need. In addition, from the very beginning, the person with a disability is involved in the whole process and has all the necessary information in an accessible way.

Some informants have commented on the **opportunities** offered by the environment for the development of this type of program; however, we found some particularly interesting comments.

One of the main opportunities offered is the chance to work for the full inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in society, participating in an increasing number of settings.

In addition, we have gradually begun to see a greater level of cooperation between secondary schools and higher education institutions in terms of inclusion and educational opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities, one of the main challenges for the future proposed in this project.

Recommendations for "Hosting protocols and introduction programs".

Programs should avoid aspects that may weaken their development, especially in terms of support. Sometimes it is somewhat diffuse that specific support figure that constantly accompanies the student at the beginning and gradually withdraws to promote security, confidence and future independence of the student. For many students, it is the first time they find themselves alone in an unfamiliar environment and therefore it is very important to attend to the emotional aspects that this generates. Hence the proposal to hold meetings prior to the beginning of the course from the team with the students and among the students themselves, since a key point of these programs is peer support and in this way we are promoting it. On the other hand, it would also be interesting to increase the number of interactions between students with and without disabilities in the day-to-day running of the programs, and beyond the mentoring programs, for example, with joint training sessions, on-campus activities, etc. In addition, sometimes the information about the academic offerings available at the end of compulsory education is somewhat confusing and sometimes does not reach families and students correctly; therefore, it is important to contribute to the dissemination tasks of both our programs and other external ones.

Ignorance continues to pose a major threat. There is more and more talk about educational inclusion at the primary and even secondary school level, but what happens afterwards, what is on offer, and can people with disabilities really obtain a university degree? Information, in this sense, and as we mentioned earlier, continues to be diffuse and scarce.

We will be able to project ourselves forward by taking advantage of strengths such as the great involvement of all professionals so that significant support networks are generated among students and that they come to the university not only to receive training, but also to continue growing personally with this experience. In addition, the person with a disability is always involved in the whole process, both at the time of admission and access as well as in the development of the program.

We must see as a great opportunity that we can take advantage of, the participation in very diverse environments, so that we continue to favor the social approach to the reality of inclusion in higher education. It is true that in recent years, and especially as a result of the implementation of the programs described in this guide, the levels of cooperation between secondary and higher education centers have increased, and this is one of the main challenges for the future.

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DOMAIN 9: Person Centered Planning

The term person-centered planning refers to a family of approaches to organizing and guiding community change in partnership with people with disabilities and their families and friends. It is a methodology aimed at creating meaningful change for people with disabilities by placing their aspirations and desires at the center of decision-making processes, and building on their interests and strengths.

The objective is to help each person to achieve their dreams, to establish life projects related to personal growth and quality of life, which means working with personal motivations. This will be achieved through the collaboration of a support team, with whom the life projects are discussed and evaluated together, where the people involved are committed and assume responsibilities, with a detailed description of the activities to be carried out being these negotiated, and always respecting the decisions of the person, prioritizing the student's decision on their goals and objectives. In short, learning takes place through shared action.

This methodology entails getting to know the person in depth, through observation and interviews with young people about their dreams, expectations, needs and competencies, getting to know who are the people the young person identifies as important in their different life contexts, as well as the community opportunities that enable the person to achieve their interests. It requires collaborative action, where respect for the dignity and integrity of the person drives the process and demands a sustained search for effective ways to address the barriers and conflicting demands that arise in the course of developing positive and possible plans.

SWOT Analysis

Regarding the collection of information on the domain centered on **person-centered planning**, the following aspects have been highlighted in the SWOT analysis:

With regard to the **weaknesses** that informants detect in the development of this type of program when analyzing the implementation of person-centered planning, several

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informants point out that it is sometimes difficult for people with disabilities themselves to gain access to certain resources, administrative procedures, etc. independently. On the other hand, a significant number of informants also point out that not all university staff working day to day in these programs have sufficient training or knowledge about the main objectives of this type of person-centered planning, as well as the lack of support and resources they occasionally encounter.

Some informants point out that the PCP will be as strong as the person's personal frame of reference, so that the role of the families and how they participate in these plans, giving their children the leading role, also plays an essential role.

On the other hand, the main **threatening factors for** the development of this type of programs under the principles of person-centered planning according to the informants are the following: firstly, they point out the additional restrictions to the programs, that is, the lack of adaptation of the environment or the lack of awareness of the environment in order to promote the autonomy of the people and that they are the ones who make all the decisions in their own lives.

Finally, some informants also point out the importance of educating the environment and making them aware of this type of plan, since lack of knowledge can lead to non-compliance with the principles of PCP within the university community.

As we have been able to verify throughout the collection of information, the informants agree that this type of programs are eminently based on this type of planning, since both the theoretical and practical content is centered on the interests, capacities and skills of the individuals, which is one of their main **strengths**. In addition, an adequate search for the place where the internships will be carried out is promoted, so that a great effort is made to know the aspirations of all students.

On the other hand, all informants agree that focusing on PCP when carrying out this type of program leads to a significant improvement in the quality of life levels of people with intellectual disabilities.

Regarding the **opportunities** that the environment puts in place to promote PCP when carrying out this type of training in higher education, not too many informants have

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commented on this domain, however, they have related several interesting issues. First, they agree on the importance of raising awareness in the direct environment where the person with a disability moves, so that their rights and possibilities are known. In addition, the numerous opportunities for inclusion and participation in society, as well as the encounters between people with and without disabilities, generate great opportunities for the implementation and development of this type of program.

Recommendations for "Person Centered Planning".

We must pay attention to the internal aspects that can weaken the development of the programs according to the person-centered planning. One point that can have a negative influence is the complexity of some administrative procedures that must be carried out to access the courses, so that the person will need significant support and it will be difficult for him/her to do these in a totally autonomous way. Another aspect to bear in mind is the lack of knowledge of some professionals about the objectives and priorities of person-centered planning, knowledge without which these programs cannot be carried out successfully. We must make this methodology of operation known so that it becomes the basis for the development of the programs, always promoting the personal autonomy and self-determination of people with disabilities. On the other hand, the family must become aware of the objectives we are going to pursue with the students, becoming facilitators and participating in these plans, giving their children the main role.

Training in person-centered planning will make it possible to work to eliminate potential external threats, such as lack of accessibility or environmental constraints that prevent the individual from being the primary agent in his or her own life. Lack of knowledge about person-centered planning can make it difficult for the learner to achieve his or her goals and objectives.

A strong element of the programs is that both their design and development are eminently based on this type of planning. The student is always at the center and everything that is worked on throughout the course must be adapted to his or her abilities, needs and interests, both at a theoretical and practical level. Furthermore,

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working with these objectives has a positive impact on all the dimensions of the quality of life model: physical well-being, emotional well-being, material well-being, interpersonal relationships, self-determination, personal development, rights and, of course, social inclusion.

And to achieve all this, we will take advantage of all the opportunities that arise such as awareness and involvement of the family, personal and university environment closest to the person with disabilities; as well as the meetings that the person makes with other people without disabilities on the university campus.

DOMAIN 10: Mentoring (by non-disabled peers)

Mentoring can be considered natural and direct support provided by peers, typically undergraduate and graduate students of a similar age who can assist with on-campus orientation, support with educational goals, help with university services, and provide social support. Peer mentoring plays a critical role in inclusion, building motivation, and ensuring that the higher education environment is friendly and welcoming. This monitoring should decrease over time, promoting young people's autonomy and increasing their self-determination.

Peer mentoring/peer support is one of the main keys to successful education and social inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities and many studies attest to the importance of peer mentoring, or "peer mediators", and describe different ways of organizing and implementing this natural support. Knowledge and implementation of these different mentoring alternatives can be an important tool in the development of training programs.

SWOT Analysis

In terms of information gathering around the domain focused on **non-disabled peer mentoring**, the following aspects have been highlighted in conducting the SWOT analysis:

Taking into account the information provided by the informants, we have detected the following **weaknesses regarding** the section on mentoring by non-disabled peers. It has been detected that in the mentoring program there are weaknesses that generate the informants' distrust towards it.

On the one hand, it is a random process, which diminishes the quality of the mentoring and makes it not a completely reliable program. People who request the help of mentors expect a lot from them, and they do not always receive all the attention they expect; this is an aspect that especially worries families, as they point it out on several occasions. On the contrary, there are cases in which a great dependence is generated towards

those who play the role of mentors, reducing the self-determination of people with disabilities.

In addition, some informants agree on the lack of contact that exists after the end of the program between mentors and mentees, producing a negative feeling in those who have maintained contact with the mentors.

Regarding the main **threats** detected, several informants point out that people who get involved in the collaboration programs as mentors may see their work hindered due to complications in the rest of their obligations, causing them to interrupt their collaboration in the program on time or indefinitely.

It seems that people without disabilities or professionals are always called upon to fill this role, and it is not taken into account that people with disabilities may be able to provide great support to other colleagues who require more help to perform certain tasks.

On the other hand, regarding the main **strengths,** most of the informants point out that it is a possibility to meet new people, regardless of their characteristics, with whom to share experiences and learn new knowledge.

There is an improvement in social skills, since the work of the mentors is not limited to providing academic support, but also improves social networks and interaction with the environment.

Finally, in terms of **opportunities,** several informants agree in commenting that volunteers to mentors are the main beneficiaries, due to the opportunities offered. Sharing time and experiences with people with disabilities will make them aware of the skills and knowledge that they can offer, promoting the inclusion of the group. For both parties, this interaction generates social and academic benefits.

Recommendations for " Mentoring (by non-disabled peers)".

In terms of mentoring activities, programs should avoid as much as possible that the process takes place without established guidelines and minimums. If it is not developed

in this way, the mentoring relationship may fail and generate distrust, leading to a reluctance on the part of the mentee to participate in such activities. Linked to this issue, attention should be paid to the relationship established between mentor and mentored student, since it may happen, as we mentioned, that the contact is scarce or that a high level of dependence is generated, and in both cases it may have a negative impact on the personal and academic development of the student with disabilities.

The attitude of the mentors will pose a threat to the correct development of the activity, although they are eager to start the process they are not always firmly committed, either by their own decision or because they are students with academic responsibilities that diminish the possibilities of attention to the mentored student. It may be interesting that the mentoring is not always performed by a student without disability, so we recommend opening the mentoring to alumni of the programs themselves so that they can advise new students from their own experience, although a supervision of the process is performed, as with mentors without disability.

Support us in the positive aspects or internal strengths, such as the important benefits that are generated for both parties, both for the mentor who is not only enriched, academically but also with a great experience on a personal level, and for the mentored student, who has the confidence of having a reference person to whom to turn to within the academic and social environment.

And in relation to all of the above, a wide range of opportunities offered by mentoring programs opens up, in terms of developing social skills, improving interpersonal relationships, increasing support networks, etc.

DOMAIN 11: Coaching (training, accompaniment and support)

Coaching refers to the role of mediators, teachers, tutors, employers or families in enhancing the person's development and performance (dreams, expectations, needs and competencies). Coaching is about provoking and supporting learning by developing strengths and allowing possibilities to flourish through relational learning, learning skills, emotional learning and learning new attitudes.

Although there are many different models of coaching, we want to identify all types of support experiences, counseling or person-centered planning process, complementary to the resources of the higher education institution and focused on supporting students to identify their interests, motivations and needs, and build their life project, including academic content, part-time employment during the program in the context of Higher Education, and planning for the post-program stage.

SWOT Analysis

Regarding the collection of information on the domain focused on **training, coaching and support**, the following aspects have been highlighted in the SWOT analysis:

In general terms, there is agreement on several **aspects that weaken** the program in this domain. In the first place, it is clear that sometimes students need additional support to be able to understand and internalize the knowledge worked on in the sessions. Secondly, it is appreciated that the support that teachers should give to students should be greater, since sometimes it is scarce or their work is not entirely correct.

In addition, other informants point out the existence of unnecessary subjects or content throughout the training.

The informants have hardly pointed out any **threats** about training, accompaniment and support. They only point out the need to improve the education of employers and staff dealing with people with intellectual disabilities.

Regarding the **strengths** detected, it has been pointed out that, throughout the training, a continuous proximity is maintained. Students receive attention from before starting the program, throughout their classes, and even after finishing the course they receive support and help from tutors, teachers or support staff.

Occasionally, according to some informants, they are assigned a reference technician to whom they can turn to whenever there is a problem during the program. It is important to highlight the presence of coaching, carried out individually or in small groups throughout the semester. It is carried out once a week, for one hour in each curricular unit.

Finally, they point out as a very relevant **opportunity**, the collaboration with other entities working with people with intellectual disabilities. This will promote awareness and sensitization of society to respect the rights of people with disabilities, especially their self-determination.

Recommendations for "Coaching (training, accompaniment and support)".

We must overcome aspects that can weaken the program in relation to the accompaniment and support of students. Sometimes, some professionals do not know how to accompany or support students in the correct way, as well as use materials that are not very accessible, so it is important to train professionals so that they know how to make the necessary adaptations in the materials they are going to provide to students, as well as when working with them if they have never done it before. It can also happen that, even if a correct support and accompaniment is provided, the student needs specific and individualized help, so that personal and individualized support must always be provided, for example, a specific material adapted to a specific student to facilitate his or her comprehension process.

We must prevent the threat posed by the lack of knowledge on disability issues of some professionals or of the University staff itself, therefore, it is essential to re-emphasize the awareness and training of the university community.

We can address all this by taking advantage of the internal strengths of the programs, such as the constant accompaniment and support both before starting the course, as well as during the development of the course and its subsequent completion with both the student and his or her family. Offering a close environment will make students and their families feel confident in the program and will generate better results. In addition, it is important to assign a reference technician to whom the students can turn to whenever they need it, as well as the weekly coaching sessions held with the students so that they always feel comfortable and accompanied in the teaching and learning process.

We will consolidate all of this by taking advantage of external opportunities that arise, such as collaboration with other entities, so that support can be provided from there to start this type of training and in turn create greater social awareness about the rights of people with disabilities and how to promote their social inclusion.

Experiences developed by the universities participating in the HiLives project and other identified good practices

The UNIdiVERSITAS Expert in Social and Labor Competences Program at the University of Salamanca

General Description

The UNIdiVERSITAS program was designed to provide university training opportunities to young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program, focused on transversal skills, is aimed at improving students' autonomy, conceptual, social, and practical skills, and employment opportunities. Being studying at the University also provides them with an inclusive experience, as they participate as equals with other students.

The design of the UNIdiVERSITAS program is consistent with the definition of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), which states that the difficulties faced by individuals with IDD when interacting with the environment are mostly related to conceptual, social, and practical skills (Schalock et al. 2010, 2021; Verdugo et al. 2013). Therefore, these type of adaptive behaviour skills guided the organization and development of the program. Also, the program has been designed in accordance with the recommendations of the "Report on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability: A Path to Education, Employment, and Community Living" developed by The National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup [NCCAW] of Think College[1].

Teaching methodology and contents

The main teaching methodology of the program is the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. The UDL is a set of principles, guidelines and checkpoints for the design and development of curricula and instruction that seeks to ensure equal opportunities for people, regardless of their characteristics and abilities. It is based on

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[1] https://thinkcollege.net/

research in the learning sciences, and its three fundamental principles focus on the deployment of supports and alternatives for the what (recognition networks), the how (strategic networks) and the why (affective networks) of learning. UDL allows the development of learning experiences in flexible ways to meet the needs of individual learners by providing multiple means of representation (eg, easy reading), engagement (eg, varied assessment methods) and motivation (eg, deployment of various active teaching methodologies). In the words of Rao et al. (2017, p. 1), "UDL is considered a curriculum design approach for students with and without disabilities that has the potential to support the meaningful inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in mainstream educational contexts". In addition, the ideas of universal design for transition (Gabriels et al. 2010) have been taken into consideration when designing the program. Together, the curricular design of the degree is based on considering the principles of both approaches:

1. Consider the multiple domains of life.
2. Provide multiple forms of assessment.
3. Promote self-determination.
4. Provide multiple resources and perspectives.
5. Provide multiple forms of representation.
6. Provide multiple forms of engagement and motivation.
7. Provide multiple forms of action and expression.

With this, the accessibility of the information has been ensured (all the teaching content is presented in an easy to read format), participation / assessment methods are diverse (evaluations are based on different objective, subjective and participation criteria) and a set of teaching strategies are deployed to improve motivation (through the variety of teaching methods themselves and the ongoing support provide by job coaches, who are hired under the degree budget). A set of teaching methodologies have been also deployed aimed at implementing the principles of Universal Design for Learning in the best possible way. Teaching has been carried out in a classroom with a non-traditional spatial arrangement of movable tables and chairs; traditional classes (i.e., master lecture or master class) have been kept to a minimum, and most of the teachers have used cooperative and problem-based learning. Since the first day, the students have an academic guide (adapted for easy reading) with essential information about the degree.

In addition, through the learning platform (Moodle) they have access to various information and resources (subscription to calendar, mobile version of the platform, student-teacher communication guidelines, videos, and additional materials).

In most classes, students have conducted both individual and group work. The composition of the groups within the classroom is carried out by each teacher with advise from the job coaches, in order to promote good relationships and support networks among students. In addition, specific groups have been created to work numerical skills and money management, since some students need more intensive supports to perform these activities. Thus, the job coaches provided specific and individualized support for these students to acquire these skills.

The UNIdiVERSITAS program is offered as a diploma (i.e., specific certification issued by a higher education institution which offers a specific, non-official, training) from the University of Salamanca. Its first edition started in 2018-2019. It lasts one academic year (38 ECTS) and is taught in the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Salamanca. The usual number of students is from 15 to 17.

The program consists of two parts. The first part of the program (from November to March) focuses on teaching students' transversal skills that may be needed to carry out a wide range of jobs. These competences are divided into the subjects. In addition, and to further improve students' employability and encourage their motivation towards active job search, they received training in job search techniques. In this subject the following skills are taught knowing where to look for job offers, learning how to write a CV or how to do a job interview, or finding jobs by using social media. From the first moment, motivation and the importance of being actively involved in the job search are aspects that are aspects on which the program is particularly focused. During the second part (March to May) students carry out their internships in different companies or university services, depending on their preferences. Thus, after analysing the work preferences of each student, they perform their internships following the methodology of supported employment. Students are trained by two job coaches in the specific tasks and competences related to their jobs. This training and support take place once they are in their workplace. This training approach fits into the 'in work support' element of supported employment. These internships have a duration of 150 hours, equivalent to a subject of 6 ECTS credits. In addition, at the end of the program, all the students must

write and present in public their "End of Degree Project" that aims to communicate in a structured way the achievements made during the internship period. Figure 1 shows the structure of the program and its organization based on those adaptive behaviour skills we would like students to improve.

MODULE	MATTER	SUBJECT	38 ECTS
(1) CONCEPTUAL	(1.1) COMMUNICATION	(1.1.04) English	3
(1) CONCEPTUAL	(1.1) COMMUNICATION	(1.1.06) Oral and written communication applied to employment settings	4
(1) CONCEPTUAL	(1.1) COMMUNICATION	(1.1.07) Competences for digital communication	3
(1) CONCEPTUAL	(1.2) SELF DETERMINATION	(1.2.08) Learning to think and self-management	4
(2) SOCIAL	(2.1) SOCIAL SKILLS	(2.1.09) Emotional intelligence and teamwork	6
(3) PRACTICAL	(3.1) PERSONAL AUTONOMY	(3.1.01) Independent living	3
(3) PRÁCTICAL	(3.2) JOB SKILLS I	(3.2.02) Labor relations and risk management	2
(3) PRACTICAL	(3.2) JOB SKILLS I	(3.2.03) Job search	2
(3) PRACTICAL	(3.4) APPLIED NUMERICAL SKILLS	(3.4.05) Numerical competence applied to the personal, academic and labor areas	3
(4) INTERNSHIP (SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT)	(3.3) JOB SKILLS II	(3.3.10) Support employment internships	6
(5) FINAL PROJECT			2

Figure 1. Unidiversitas' program

Structure of the program

- *Academic period*

The classes taught in the first part of the program are focused on improving student employability. According to students' opinion (collected through a survey at the end of the program) the classes have allowed them to demonstrate a series of skills and knowledge in their workplace. Specifically, they highlight the following skills as the most useful during the internship period:

- Social skills
- Assertiveness
- Empathy
- Give and receive feedback
- Active listening
- Digital skills
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Decision making
- Personal autonomy

- Oral and written communication
- Delegation
- Numerical knowledge
- Risk management

- ***Supported employment internships***

Supported employment internships are developed from March to May, generally in the morning (from 9.00 to 13.00), although in some cases work schedule has been slightly different to ensure the coincidence of students and professional tutors (professional tutors are employees who play the role of natural supports and assist students during their internships after receiving advice by our job coaches).

During the internship period, almost all the students have the support of a job coach and two professional tutors (colleagues on the job). Only 4 students have had a single professional tutor and a job coach.

The methodology used during the internship period is that of supported employment. This means that the entire internship process is developed from an individualized perspective. To this end, a job orientation process with the students is conducted by job coaches. Thus, in the pre-internship phase, tools for collecting professional information are applied an inventory of job preferences is administered, and a personalized interview is prepared with elements from the Professional Profile - EUSE Model template.

The final interview allows for the collection of data regarding: (1) personal information, (2) people involve in deliberations about students' professional interests, (3) health status and data on disability, (4) studies undertaken, (5) further training received, (6) work history, (7) hobbies and interests, and (8) job preferences. Regarding this last aspect, data is collected on: expectations, ideal career, preferred work tasks, preferred working conditions, preferred work environment. Data is also collected on (9) the skills and abilities of each student: daily living skills, communication skills, social interaction skills, daily routine, and additional information that each student consider of interest.

Once each student decides what job they want to be trained in, and the skills/training and job requirements are checked, the program contacts the selected companies and University services.

Once the protocols and agreements necessary for the start of the internship have been signed with the different services and companies, the analysis of the job is carried out. The analysis of each job position is carried out in collaboration between the employees of the selected companies or services of the University and the job coaches. The main goal of this analysis is to identify possible difficulties that the student might have, to design the necessary supports.

During the internship period, the job coaches record all work procedures so that students learn the job tasks without difficulty. In addition, different supports are designed for the specific needs of each student. The occupational risk prevention manuals are also adapted for easy reading.

Therefore, in addition to the transversal skills taught during the first period of the program, each student receives additional training in the tasks and skills that are specific to his or her chosen workplace. For example, those who complete their internship in the position of "service and information officer" must demonstrate a number of skills and learn a number of tasks, which are then assessed by their professional tutors. Example of skills are:

- Punctuality
- Flexibility in the workplace
- Organization
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Problem solving, conflicts and contingencies handling
- Ability to carry out tasks
- Ability to work without supervision
- Capacity for teamwork
- Communicative skills
- Observation skills

Academic results

The general structure of the academic program is organized as a set of transversal and specific competences that are specified in a set of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are statements that describe the knowledge or skills students should acquire by the end of a particular subject. These learning outcomes are assessed by each teacher using a variety of assessment methodologies. Finally, since the program must conform

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to the numerical grading system of the University of Salamanca, each student has an average grade in each subject that reflects the degree to which he or she has achieved the learning outcomes. The overall average rating of the participants in the editions developed is upper 7.50. The average grade obtained by our students during their internships in the editions developed is upper 8.50. Regarding other performance indicators, the average percentage of class attendance is high, upper 95% which denotes a high level of student involvement.

Employability outcomes

Overall, the Unidiversitas program has successfully met its employment objectives. Firstly, because it has served to train all students in a set of transversal or soft skills that are useful for any job. Secondly, the programme has allowed each student to carry out a 2-month internship period, during which they learn the tasks of a job of their choice. The students themselves stress that the program has given them something they did not have, the confidence and certainty of knowing how to perform the tasks of a position.

Some students have got a job after finishing, in companies collaborating with the internship period or in in others. Some others prepared exams for positions in public administration, as the University of Salamanca, councils, etc., and at least two of them got a position. Some students are preparing the free access exams to obtain the Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) Degree. The objective of these students is to obtain the ESO diploma and then prepare for accessing to public administration job offers.

Once students graduate, they are put in contact with different organizations, recruitment agencies and temporary employment agencies to which they send their CVs. In addition, we provide them with information about job or training offers that come to us and may be suitable for them. Also, they are provided with easy reading contents to prepare exams for public service positions

Connection to community resources and employers

Once the students graduate, the necessary steps were taken to put the students in contact with different entities that are part of the Salamanca Platform of Entities for

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Employment. From the group of entities that make up this platform, those that dedicate their activity to people with disabilities or young people at risk of social exclusion were selected. Likewise, information has been provided to students on new calls for competitions, providing them with summaries and general information adapted to easy reading.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the activity of the Unidiversitas program is developed at different levels with different methodologies. First, the management and coordination team of the diploma itself holds regular meetings in which issues related to the diploma are addressed. As far as the students are concerned, fluid communication is always maintained with the group about the progress of the course, the teaching methodology and the general functioning of the different subjects. As for the teachers, direct communication is maintained since the beginning of the degree, providing them with documents to facilitate and standardise the different aspects of the implementation of the degree. Also, informal meetings are carried out to discuss their participation in the degree, the problems that might arise and other aspects related to their teaching.

In addition, satisfaction and opinion surveys are administered to both students and teachers to obtain average global indicators that allow the continuous improvement of the program.

Two different evaluation tools are used:

A. For students: questionnaires developed by the program for each content.

B. For professors: they complete a survey based on the one used by the quality system of the University of Salamanca. The standard model has been adapted to fit some specific issues of the Unidiversitas program.

Program staff

The Unidiversitas team is made up of 5 people: 1 director, 2 job coaches and 2 professors from the Faculty of Psychology.

The program also involves:

- Teachers of different undergraduate programs at the University of Salamanca

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- Professional tutors (colleagues on the job) who play the role of natural supports.

- Academic tutors, associated to the Faculties of Education and Psychology, as well as to different services of the University.

- Students without disabilities who join the mentoring program. The mentor role is understood as a figure of an equal that promotes participation spaces outside the classroom.

- Job coaches who are hired through a public call and selection process, with training and experience in supported employment, human resources, easy reading, and transversal competences.

Contact with families

Family involvement is important through the program. However, since the main goal of the program is to promote students' autonomy and self-determination, familiars are only contacted when necessary for decision-making, either because the student is not clear about what he or she would like to work on and needs the support of the family to identify his or her strengths and weaknesses, or in cases in which the student has an organic disease in which it is necessary to take into account whether the tasks that he or she has chosen can be carried out without risk, as it is sometimes necessary to even discuss the decision with his or her doctors.

In the first edition, relatives were consulted in only one case and in the current edition in two.

Connections with organizations and companies outside the University

UNIdiVERSITAS submitted its design and training program to the main disability services providers at national level, which gave their support to the program through a letter of endorsement. At the local level, UNIdiVERSITAS has established synergies and relations with the main local organizations, within the framework of a collaboration strategy.

And of course, the program has contacted with local companies that that provide internship opportunities for our students.

One of the main conclusions after implementing these program for four years is that it constitutes a great opportunity not only to promote the academic development of the

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students with IDD, but also their social and personal development. By feeling like full citizens within the university community, we observe improvements in their self-determination as well as in their future aspirations. The university offers an ideal context for them to be encouraged to continue studying, pursue a better job, expand their social network, and above all, feel part of a community that also belongs to them. This program also has an impact on the University community itself. University services have realized that many of the supports provided to our students in their workplace are also useful to other employees. They have valued diversity as an element that brings richness to their service. Professors have also experienced that by implementing UDL they can improve other courses they teach and benefit a wider range of students.

In summary, having individuals with intellectual disability studying at the University improves not only their employability, but also their sense of community belonging, as the University becomes a much more facilitating space when they are and participate in it.

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Website and Video

- Website https://inico.usal.es/cursos_formacion/unidiversitas-2/
- Video https://youtu.be/It-wp2aGmMI

Individual Multidisciplinary Studies Program at the University of Aveiro

General Description

The Individual Multidisciplinary Studies Programme (IMSP), running at the University of Aveiro, (UAvr) Portugal, since October 2021, addresses the main purpose of providing significant opportunities (inclusive and with support) of social and personal development for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Higher Education (HE), through participation in the academic and social life within the University. Being promoted under a cooperation protocol established between the University of Aveiro and the Group Jerónimo Martins, S.A., the program pursues the overall objectives:

i. To enable people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to acquire specific competences in the available scientific areas they choose, according to their interests and competences, as well as personal, social, and transversal competences, through the opportunity to study in HE, together with their peers.

ii. To provide the development of competences needed by people with IDD to improve their employability profile and increase their civic participation / citizenship.

iii. To foster the mobilisation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to the inclusion of people with IDD in the community.

The design of the program was inspired by the set of elements proposed by O'Brien et al. (2019), which offer 'milestones' for a continuum between a fully inclusive Higher Education (HE) context and a position where the response offered to students with IDD 'merely' takes place in a physical HE institution, without providing students with opportunities for full interaction, either in formal lessons or in moments of conviviality and leisure on campus.

The organisation [and evaluation] of the program respects the "Think College Standards, Quality Indicators and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education" (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2011; Lynch & Getzel, 2013; Wier, 2019).

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Structure of the program

The IMSP is organized into four semesters, during which the students attend the regular classes, alongside with their peers, in regular settings. At the end of the second and fourth semesters, the students attend extracurricular internships, in employment contexts.

- *Academic period*

The curricular structure of the course comprehends a set of 33 curricular units, distributed by 16 scientific areas, offered by seven departments and schools of the University of Aveiro (UAvr) (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1 – IMSP curricular structure at 1st. Semester, as published in "Diário da República, 2ª Série, Parte E, nº 140, de 21 de julho de 2021", pp. 97.

Unidades curriculares (opcionais)		Área científica	ECTS	Código
História de Portugal	CS	Ciências Sociais	8	42613
Psicologia Relacional	PSIC	Psicologia	4	40131
Metodologia do Projeto Multimédia	CTC	Ciências e Tecnologia da Comunicação	6	40987
Sociologia das Organizações.	CS	Ciências Sociais	6	40709
Psicologia da Educação.	CE	Ciências da Educação	6	43414
Projetos de Intervenção Educacional III.	DTE	Didática e Tecnologia Educativa. . . .	10	41803
Gestão das Organizações	GES	Gestão	6	89135
Marketing I	MARK	Marketing	6	81537
Técnicas de Expressão Oral e Escrita	L	Línguas.	6	18034
Animação, Itinerários e Eventos Turísticos	TUR	Turismo.	6	17554
Gestão da Qualidade no Turismo.	TUR	Turismo.	6	17557
Fundamentos de Marketing	MARK/Pub	Marketing e Publicidade	6	18103
Aplicações Informáticas	I	Informática	6	18033
Outra(s) a)	–	—	–	–

Table 2 – IMSP curricular structure at 2nd. Semester, as published in "Diário da República, 2ª Série, Parte E, nº 140, de 21 de julho de 2021", pp. 97.

Unidades curriculares (opcionais)		Área científica	ECTS	Código
Sociologia da Educação e da Escola	CE	Ciências da Educação	6	41014
TIC e Educação Básica	DTE	Didática e Tecnologia Educativa. . . .	4	40511
A Criança e a Saúde.	CE	Ciências da Educação	4	47892
História da Educação	CE	Ciências da Educação	4	47895
Expressões Artísticas I	EA	Estudos de Arte	8	47893
Projetos de Intervenção Educacional III.	DTE	Didática e Tecnologia Educativa. . . .	10	41803
Necessidades Especiais.	CSAU	Ciências da Saúde	4	41215
Economia do Turismo.	E	Economia	6	40721
Sociologia e Metodologia em Turismo	TUR	Turismo.	6	42012
Sociologia Política	CS	Ciências Sociais	6	47254
Políticas da Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia. . . .	CS	Ciências Sociais	6	47204
Domínios de Estudo da Música	MU	Música	6	47082
Música em Portugal	MU	Música	4	41409
Literatura para a Infância e Juventude.	EL	Estudos Literários.	6	43484
Merchandising e Gestão do Ponto de Venda. . . .	MARK/Pub	Marketing e Publicidade	6	18107
Planeamento e Política do Turismo	TUR	Turismo	6	17553
Outra(s) a)	–	—	–	–

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Other curricular units were added after the first and second semesters, by proposal of the HE teachers who had been working with the IMSP students and found that some of the courses under their responsibility, which still weren't part of the curricular offer, could be a good option for the students and for the dynamics of their classes, enriched due to the improved diversity and the emerging (positive) differentiation/inclusive pedagogy: *Marketing II*; *Projeto de Vendas e Marketing*; *Logística e Distribuição Multicanal*; and *Criatividade, Comunicação e Ludicidade*.

The students must complete five curricular units each school year, attending two or three courses each semester.

- ***Supported employment internships***

The first edition of IMSP is being sponsored by a major Portuguese business group, Jerónimo Martins S.A., which owns a multinational retail chain and is strongly committed to implementing an intensive inclusion policy and practices in its hundreds of shops, services, and logistics ("Programa incluir: um espaço para todos" (*Including Program: a space for all*).

As a sponsor of IMSP, it is also actively involved in the dynamics of the course, integrating its Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, with members of the university and students.

Two extracurricular internships were therefore planned in Jerónimo Martins S.A. contexts, which take place respectively after the end of the 1st and 2nd curricular year's classes.

The first internship took place in July 2022, in the "Centro Incluir" of Jerónimo Martins S.A. - a space in which students can participate in a *simulated reality* but which provides them with contact with real company situations, without the pressure of the public. The internship has been much successful, due to the students' discovery of a promising world in terms of employment opportunities; and due to the lessons they learnt, which they identified in the evaluation of this experience.

The second internship is scheduled for July 2023 and will take place in a modality that already includes the public, although with the proper support from other employees, who are receiving specific training that prepares them to adequately interact with this population, whether they are the public that goes to the shops or company employees.

Teaching methodology and resources

In its first edition, the program is attended by six students (with the support of a coordinator-tutor). Following a Person-Centred Planning methodology, the students choose, in each semester, the curricular units that best match their interests and motivations, which results in six different curricular plans.

The students use all the resources available to the academic community – libraries, cafeterias, sports facilities… - and they benefit from a sole additional and powerful resource: the mentors, who are their peers and classmates.

This mentor-mentee relationship has been an unquestionable force in the process of the students' inclusion, mediating interactions with curriculum contents, learning activities, other classmates, and with the teachers.

The coordinator-tutor plays the central role of supporting the students, the teachers and the mentees; and she mediates the interactions between all of them.

The director is another source of support within the dynamics of the program. With the coordinator-tutor, she supports the students, the teachers, the other students and other professionals in the university.

Both the director and the coordinator-tutor collaborate with the families of the students, as they are fundamental in the lives of their children and can be an important source of support for them (Francis et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2018), although keeping as a priority the promotion of the self-determination of the students.

The teachers of the UAvr have shown high competencies to enrich their practices, adopting means like problem-based learning, group-work, ongoing assessment, use of digital technologies and others to expand and enrich learning opportunities for all.

The area in which teachers show the greatest need for clarification and support is student assessment: all of them, since the beginning of teaching the class that includes the student with IDD, ask for help in this area. Invariably, they immediately adjust the forms and means of assessment, making it flexible and contingent to the different profiles of IMSP students.

Academic results

As the first edition of IMSP is still running, the academic results are confined to two semesters. The students have had positive academic results in all courses, with one sole exception, so far.

Moreover, attendance and punctuality, with 100% scores, deserve a special mention. Effectively, it was found that students only miss school if they are sick and forced to stay at home. Even so, in these cases, they take the initiative to ask the teacher for permission to follow the class through Zoom or other telematic means, which has always been done.

Employability outcomes

As the first edition is still running, IMSP hasn't got outcomes in the field of employability.

Connection to community resources and employers

In the specific circumstances where this first edition of IMSP is running, the connections to the employers are quite restricted to the enterprise Jerónimo Martins, S. A.

However, the students are closely linked to the Parents-in-Network Association, which is formally linked to the University of Aveiro, by protocol, in this project and in others; three of the students of the course continue, two or three times a week, to attend the activities promoted by the association; these have the particularity of being always carried out in the community, in collaboration with other structures, such as the Town Hall, Sporting Club of Aveiro, the Museum of the City of Aveiro, FNAC,...

Also, in the context of the University, the students have access to other organizations in the community, such as Fábrica da Ciência (part of the university) and others.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the program is being carried out by reference to the "Think College Standards, Quality Indicators and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education" (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2011; Lynch & Getzel, 2013; Wier, 2019). There's a doctorate student developing her thesis in Education on this subject. She's evaluating the program focusing

on the students' perspective, in a Person-Centered methodology. Within this approach, Photo-voice and focus-group are important means to generate and collect data.

Program staff

The IMSP staff is comprised of people within different roles, all of them crucial for the success of a program with these characteristics. So, every member of the academic community is an important element, as the environment/social climate of the university influences the sense of belonging, participation and learning of IMSP students (Espinoza, 2019; Pereira, 2017). Nevertheless, there's a "nucleus" of people more closely linked to the program:

- All UAvr teachers responsible for the curricular units attended by the students.

- All the students' classmates - especially those who play the role of mentors.

- All UAvr staff members, who from the first moment welcomed these students and set processes in motion to promote their full and (positively) differentiated inclusion (e.g., offering training related to the use of the libraries, adapted to their profile, so that they can increasingly use this resource autonomously).

- The coordinator-tutor.

- The program Director.

- The Program Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, which frames the direct involvement of the company Jerónimo Martins S. A. (sponsor of IMSP) in the daily life of the students and of the program.

- The IMSP students themselves, who are also part of this Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, participating in the analysis and intervention that are being implemented to optimise the IMSP processes.

- Besides the Directors of the different courses where the curricular units attended by the students are integrated, the University Departments and the Academic Management Services, which invariably show total availability and willingness to solve the emerging problems, IMSP also counts, since the first moment, on the unconditional support of the Rectory of the University of Aveiro, which worked side-by-side with the "operational" team in the creation of the course and is always available to support the resolution of problems posed by an innovative way of "doing things" in the university;

- The students' families, who have shown themselves to be partners who are always available, sharing their perspectives and knowledge, indispensable in many moments, and collaborating whenever necessary in the solutions created together for some problems that emerge.

Closing

At the end of this presentation of the Individual Multidisciplinary Studies Programme, at the University of Aveiro, Portugal, a statement by a professor who have had the students with IDD in her class is maybe the best way of illustrating the effects of the inclusion of students with IDD in regular Higher Education classes: "This is being an unexpected experience to me: The atmosphere in the class is excellent, the students - all the students - are open to each other, they are helping each other like I don't remember it happened before. I can see that they are more motivated and active in learning situations, and available to help each other - everyone, not just the students with IDD. Students with IDD are actively involved in the activities, they are very interested, attentive, punctual, and assiduous. I feel that I have started a new and motivating phase in my academic life!" (The voice of a Professor of the University of Aveiro, whose class the students with IDD are attending).

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Professional diploma program for people with intellectual disabilities at the University of Iceland.

General Description and Inclusive higher education

In 2007, the diploma program was established by the former Iceland University of Education, which has since merged with the University of Iceland (UI) and forms the core of the UI's School of Education (Stefánsdóttir and Jóhannsdóttir 2011).

Access to higher education for people with intellectual disabilities is a novel concept in

Iceland and the college experience is traditionally reserved for those who have achieved secondary education qualifications. The vocational diploma program at the UI is a part-time two-year inclusive vocational diploma program for students with intellectual disabilities who have completed a 4-year upper secondary school education and are interested in working in pre-primary schools, after-school program or within the field of disability (e.g., self-advocacy). These students do not meet the university's criteria for admission since they have not passed the matriculation examination (Ministry of Education Science and Culture 2008).

The program has been in existence since 2007 and since its inception, 7 cohorts have graduated. Enrolment is possible for 12 students every year. There are two cohorts at the same time. The part 'Vocational diploma' included in the name of the program refers to work-based learning for the students. It includes both theoretical study and practical qualification in pedagogical settings.

The basic values that the study program and the University of Iceland explicitly represent are oriented towards a social model of disability, the demands of interest groups of people with intellectual disabilities, the Human Rights Convention and Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

"The diploma program is based on the understanding that inclusive education should be available to all students at all education levels and students should be granted the support they need to be included in the academic and social life of university (Stefánsdóttir& Björnsdóttir 2015, Stefánsdóttir& Jóhannsdóttir 2011).

The study program itself is described as inclusive and is designed to be inclusive from the outset. Students that take part in the program attend courses with other students at the university. Individual seminars are explicitly intended only for students of the inclusive study program. The program and the design of the seminars are tailored and organized to the needs and interests of the students. All students benefit from accessible learning material, shorter lectures, regular breaks, smaller assessment units, more discussions and diverse learning and working opportunities.

The structure of the diploma program at the School of Education

The vocational diploma is a part-time non-credit bearing a two-year program that does not provide access to further education at the university. On the one hand, the aim of the program is to prepare students for specific jobs within the field of education, in pre-primary schools, after-school clubs and within the field of disability and self-advocacy (occupations in which the School of Education provides training). On the other hand, the aim of the program is to give students with intellectual disabilities an opportunity for college education and practical knowledge and skills in inclusive education settings to promote their participation in society (University of Iceland 2022).

The program structure comprises both mandatory courses and free electives. There has never been a 'special' curriculum for the diploma program; the learning outcomes for each course are adapted to meet the needs of each diploma student who also receives support from student mentors who are undergraduate students at the School of Education. There is peer to peer support to assist students, individually or in small groups, with assignment participation and accessing the course material and lectures (Stefánsdóttir and Björnsdóttir 2015, 2016).

All first-year diploma students enroll in the same courses which consist of career guidance/practicum and two large mandatory courses offered across different undergraduate program at the School of Education, with over 100 students, including 15–20 diploma students (depending on the size of each class). The second year of study the diploma students spread out and have free electives which are smaller courses with 20–30 students, including one to three diploma students. They select courses depending

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on the scope of their training (early education, leisure studies or social education) and consequently these courses also include students who are being trained as pre-primary schoolteachers or are earning BA-degrees in leisure studies and social education. These courses are all inclusive in principle, with an individualized and adapted curriculum. The level of adaptation differs depending on the needs of each student, the subject, and the teaching methods and in some instances the diploma students successfully undergo assessment without any adaptations (Stefánsdóttir and Björnsdóttir 2015).

The two large mandatory courses offered to the first-year diploma students have been redesigned as cooperative learning with the aim of making the courses more accessible to all students. Although collaboration and teamwork are common in college education, program and courses are generally not organized in the tradition of cooperative learningwhich involves students working in groups on assignments that cannot be completed by individual students within the given time frame (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith 2007). The redesign of these courses as cooperative learning means that there has not been a need for peer-to-peer support as academic support during the first year; there is less emphasis on lectures and more on cooperative assignments where the contribution of all is valued regardless of physical or cognitive ability (Stefánsdóttir and Björnsdóttir 2016).

Nevertheless, the student mentors have proven to be an asset for the inclusion process.

The structure of the study program comprises 4 semesters, one semester contains 15 ECTS. A total of 60 credits are acquired in the four semesters of the program.
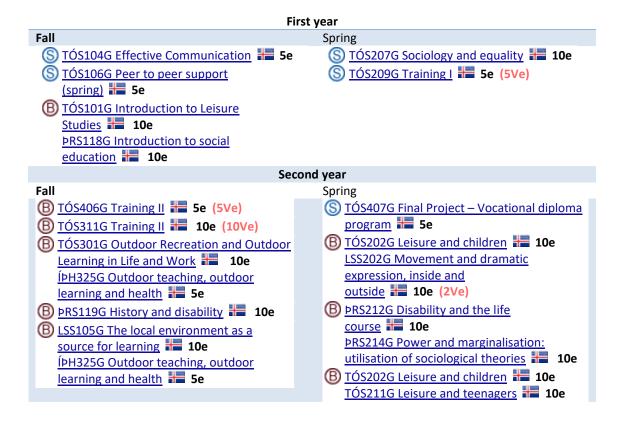
TÓS101 Vocational studies for people with disabilities, Diploma
(Courses in 2022-2023)
Programme composition

First year	
Fall	Spring
Ⓢ TÓS104G Effective Communication 🇮🇸 **5e**	Ⓢ TÓS207G Sociology and equality 🇮🇸 **10e**
Ⓢ TÓS106G Peer to peer support (spring) 🇮🇸 **5e**	Ⓢ TÓS209G Training I 🇮🇸 **5e** **(5Ve)**
Ⓑ TÓS101G Introduction to Leisure Studies 🇮🇸 **10e**	
ÞRS118G Introduction to social education 🇮🇸 **10e**	

Second year	
Fall	Spring
Ⓑ TÓS406G Training II 🇮🇸 **5e** **(5Ve)**	Ⓢ TÓS407G Final Project – Vocational diploma program 🇮🇸 **5e**
Ⓑ TÓS311G Training II 🇮🇸 **10e** **(10Ve)**	Ⓑ TÓS202G Leisure and children 🇮🇸 **10e**
Ⓑ TÓS301G Outdoor Recreation and Outdoor Learning in Life and Work 🇮🇸 **10e**	LSS202G Movement and dramatic expression, inside and outside 🇮🇸 **10e** **(2Ve)**
ÍÞH325G Outdoor teaching, outdoor learning and health 🇮🇸 **5e**	Ⓑ ÞRS212G Disability and the life course 🇮🇸 **10e**
Ⓑ ÞRS119G History and disability 🇮🇸 **10e**	ÞRS214G Power and marginalisation: utilisation of sociological theories 🇮🇸 **10e**
Ⓑ LSS105G The local environment as a source for learning 🇮🇸 **10e**	Ⓑ TÓS202G Leisure and children 🇮🇸 **10e**
ÍÞH325G Outdoor teaching, outdoor learning and health 🇮🇸 **5e**	TÓS211G Leisure and teenagers 🇮🇸 **10e**

Peer to peer support

The program focuses on an inclusive setting. In addition, the program is committed to the concept of universal design of learning, cooperative learning methods and collaboration among students. In addition, peer-to-peer support is given high priority - this includes helping students to achieve their educational goals and to participate in the social life of the university. In their studies, students are supported by the organizers of the study program and by peer support. Students at the School of education can enroll a class about peer-to-peer support.

Course Description:

The subjects of the course are social interaction, co-operation and learning assistance for students who may need assistance and / or support in their studies at School of Education.

This course will focus on new emphases and innovations in education with a focus on inclusive education and universal design. Coaching, equality, inclusive society, and human rights will also be discussed in a broad context. Ways will be introduced to enhance the educational and social participation of students in the university in a variety of ways. At the end of the course, students receive confirmation that they have completed the course which they can, for example, use in their CV.

The Collaboration with fellow students usually takes three lessons a week. The collaboration may include educational assistance, for example in project work or spending time together at the library or Háma and participation in social events on behalf of student associations. There will be five meetings with teachers in the first half off the semester as well as one working day where students receive support and training. In addition, students can book meetings as needed with the course teachers.

Students do a journal and submit a final report on their experience.

Learning Outcomes:

- *Knowledge*
  - Students have become familiar with the concept of inclusive education and universal design
  - Students have knowledge about innovation in education
  - Students have knowledge of the status of marginalized groups in the society.
- *Skills*
  - Students are capable to explore relevant data about their study
  - Students have strengthened their ability to work with and support their fellow students
  - Students can reflect on their common experience
  - Students can cooperate, discuss various issues, and rationalize them with a group

- ***Competences***
    - Students can present issues about different subjects related to working with a diverse student group
    - Students have developed skills to organize events with their fellow students
    - Students have the practical skills to support students in social and educational settings in a variety of situations.

Program staff

The staff of the program are 2 project managers.

The program also involves:

- University teachers at the University of Iceland
- Academic focus group.
- Peer to peer support team, students at the University

Evaluation.

The diploma program was defined as an experimental or development program from 2007 to 2013 and was during that time evaluated by means of research. The main aim of the research was to gather information about the program, how it could be improved and how students were supported academically and socially. Employment outcomes of graduated students were explored to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational aspect of the program. Some articles have been written about the diploma program both in Icelandic and English and are included in the references.

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Including and connecting in higher education: networking opportunities for independent lives - HiLives in Flanders of Ghent University.

Higher education in Flanders

Inclusive higher education for people with (intellectual) disabilities is a right. This states paragraph 5 of Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This paragraph guarantees access to general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning. This without discrimination and on an equal basis with others (United Nations, n.d.).

Although Belgium ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009, there is no tradition regarding inclusive higher education for persons with (intellectual) disabilities. The flow into higher education is mortgaged by too low expectations and a lack of qualitative adaptation (Schraepen, 2021) with the lack of a legal framework as cause and result.

In Belgium, there are three communities responsible for regulating and implementing (inclusive) higher education: the Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking communities. In particular, the Higher Education Decree (2013) of the Flemish community lays down the guidelines regarding the decretal and regulatory admission requirements (Art. II.195). Although it is possible to deviate from these and the decree mentions the possibility of installing reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, both do not meet the aspirations and needs of people with (intellectual) disabilities.

In accordance with the legal framework, initiatives by university colleges and universities regarding inclusive higher education remain absent. Higher education in Flanders itself determines whether and how a student may participate in educational activities and may or may not use educational support activities. If a person with an (intellectual) disability is given the opportunity to study, this participation is characterized more by an individual commitment from a university college or university and thus an experimental character, rather than being able to invoke a right.

- *Higher education Decree*

The Higher Education Decree (2013) deals with the "officially registered institutions", i.e. "the university colleges and universities" as "institutions of public utility for post-initial education, scientific research and scientific services..." (Art. II.1).

The decree also provides an overview of all recognized Flemish universities (Art. II.2) and university colleges (Art. II.3) and their teaching qualifications (chapter 5).

Article II.57 states that higher education comprises courses leading to a graduate degree, a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. Higher education also includes courses that can be concluded with a postgraduate certificate. In addition, the doctor's degree is also conferred in higher education.

A person can only enroll at an university or university college if he / she meets the statutory and regulatory admission requirements (Art. II.195).

A person can enroll through a diploma contract, a credit contract or an exam contract (Art. II.199).

With a diploma contract, the student aims to obtain a diploma from a specific study program. Those who register for a credit contract, on the other hand, work towards obtaining a credit for one or more included courses. Finally, an exam contract is aimed at obtaining a degree, a diploma or a credit certificate. Whether and how the student may participate in educational activities and make use of educational support activities is determined by the institution (Art. II.201).

Institutions can decide that certain courses are not eligible for a credit and / or exam contract (Art. II.199).

To support the policies pursued by universities and university colleges in the context of inclusive higher education, an additional amount has been added to the social allowance since the 2017 financial year. This amount may only be used for program-related matters concerning students with disabilities, as described in Article II.276, § 3 (Art. II.117 and Art. II.118).

This article states that students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations.

Each institutional board specifies in the education regulations the procedure that students with disabilities must follow in order to request reasonable accommodations and the way in which they can lodge an appeal within the institution against a refusal of accommodations (Art. II.221). In the examination regulations, the institution states the procedure that students with disabilities must follow in order to request reasonable accommodations with regard to the exams and the way in which they can appeal against a refusal of accommodations within the institution (Art. II.221).

In the context of reasonable accommodations, students who are unable to follow certain courses due to their disability may be exempted from doing so if they follow alternative educational activities. The board of the institution decides in consultation with the student concerned about the exemption and records the replacement activities.

Furthermore, boards can, jointly or individually, take measures to guarantee the accessibility of higher education - in a material and immaterial sense - with regard to students from objectively demarcated population groups whose participation in higher education is significantly lower than that of other population groups (Art. II.276).

Boards have the option to take or maintain corrective inequality measures, insofar as these measures:

have a temporary nature and disappear when the objective set out in the first paragraph has been achieved, and

does not imply an unnecessary restriction of other people's rights.

Finally, universities and university colleges also offer student facilities (Art. II.336).

Student services aim to promote equal access to and participation of all students in higher education by improving the basic conditions for studying. They pursue this goal by offering tangible and intangible help and services and by removing study obstacles (Art. II.337).

The allocation of student facilities may be linked to specific conditions (Art. II.339). Furthermore, access to student facilities can be differentiated on the basis of the number of credits for which a student enrolls (Art. II.340).

The Support Centre Inclusive Higher Education (SIHO) has the task of guiding and supporting the institutions in the implementation of the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Central to this implementation is improving the participation of students with disabilities in Flemish higher education (Art. III.98 / 2).

- *Conclusion*

The Flemish government is indeed making efforts to make higher education accessible to a very diverse group of people. However, the question remains whether people with (intellectual) disabilities belong to this group.

There is a strong normative image of persons with (intellectual) disabilities and their possibilities, ambitions, motivation, ... to continue studying. Having a secondary school diploma is and remains an indispensable condition for enrolment. Because of their school career in special education or in an adapted track at a regular school, people with (intellectual) disabilities often possess a certificate that is useless to a university or university college.

The section "HiLives in Flanders" offers a counter narrative with regard to these prevailing ideas.

HiLives in Flanders

- *Aim of the project*

HiLives in Flanders strives for inclusive higher education for students with (intellectual) disabilities.

Ghent University is the driving force behind this project. However, this does not mean that we only want to realize inclusive higher education within the walls of our own university.

Following Hart et al. (2006), we can state that we aim to promote the 'inclusive individual support model'. Through this project, students with (intellectual) disabilities take classes in regular higher education institutions and ditto programs.

- ***Target audience***

Every person with an (intellectual) disability who wishes to study at a Flemish institution of higher education can apply for HiLives in Flanders.

People with (intellectual) disabilities

In the description of our target audience, we deliberately put the word 'intellectual' between parentheses. We consider this intervention as lowering the threshold, because not everyone with this label recognizes his self / herself in it or, conversely, some people without this label experience similar thresholds as people with intellectual disabilities (for example: not having a secondary school diploma).

Any person with an (intellectual) disability who has a desire to study can come to us, regardless of age, race, gender...

Flemish higher education institutions

Since the Decree on Higher Education applies only to Flemish institutions of higher education, we deliberately limit ourselves to persons with (intellectual) disabilities who wish to study at one (or more) Flemish institutions recognized by the decree.

Study wish

Study wishes come in all shapes and sizes. When a person with an (intellectual) disability reaches out to us, we do not expect him or her to follow a predetermined path. The person with an (intellectual) disability can choose to:

- follow one or more courses,

- do an internship or not,

- follow a part of one or more courses,

- take examinations or not,

- ...

- ***Study path***

HiLives in Flanders is based on the idea that every study path is characterized by a variety of characteristics and particularities. Consequently each study path is shaped differently. Nevertheless, four common phases can be distinguished in these trajectories. Table 1 explains these. In what follows we elaborate them in greater detail.

Course of study path student with (intellectual) disability	
Phase 1	Exploring study interests
Phase 2	Matching the study wish with the study options
Phase 3	Start of the study program: registration and determination of modalities
Phase 4	Offering continued support

Exploring study interests

The starting point of each trajectory are the study interests of the person with an (intellectual) disability. At this stage, interests, talents and ambitions are explored. These are sometimes strongly expressed and at other times rather vague. Depending on the clarity of the direction the person with an (intellectual) disability wants to go, more or less time is taken to explore these elements.

Furthermore, possible (pre)conditions are also taken into account. For example: the distance from the place of residence, the cost tied to follow a course or training....

Matching the study wish with the study options

In the second stage, we search for an appropriate field of study, education and/or course. We first explore the various possibilities ourselves and then consult the person with an (intellectual) disability.

Our proposals are offered on a non-binding basis: one is free to accept none, one or more of the options provided. Self-determination of the person with an (intellectual) disability is central here.

Start of the study program: registration and determination of modalities

Once the person with an (intellectual) disability has made a choice, contact is made with the concerned university college or university. Together with them we look at the possibility of enrolling the person with an (intellectual) disability.

Despite the fact that a secondary school diploma is described in the Decree on Higher Education (2013) as a prerequisite for admission, the need for it appears to be limited when a person with an (intellectual) disability is willing to enroll with the use of a credit contract.

However, some higher education institutions formulate additional conditions in their Education and Examination Regulations for enrolling with a credit contract, such as: the requirement to have the consent of the lecturer, only being able to take theoretical courses.... It happens that these hinder the person with an (intellectual) disability from pursuing his or her study wish. In this case, we also enter into a dialogue with the institution concerned to discuss further possibilities.

Besides the modalities regarding the enrollment, time is also taken to discuss the (support) needs of the person with an (intellectual) disability and the possibility of installing reasonable adjustments.

Offering continued support

We do not only support persons with an (intellectual) disability in realizing their study wish: we also stay connected during their study trajectory.

On a regular basis we check whether the study program meets the person's expectations, what is going well and what is not. If desirable, a consultation with the lecturer or the head of training is inserted.

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Complementary information on the experience and results of the programs of the University of Aveiro and the University of Salamanca.

This complementary information on the experience and results of the programs of the University of Aveiro and the University of Salamanca was obtained from the working sessions with students of both programs during the visit to Aveiro by students and professors of the University of Salamanca during the month of September 2022.

A meeting was held between students and professors from both universities, with the aim of allowing students to get to know each other so that the present research would not only contribute to increase knowledge about good practices in higher education for people with intellectual disabilities, but also serve as a meeting point and exchange of satisfactory personal experiences among students.

The activities are framed within the objective of seeking improvement proposals for the training programs, so that in order to obtain truly meaningful opinions, it was considered that the students should be the ones to give them. From a phenomenological approach, we sought to prioritize the opinions of the participants regarding different aspects of the programs.

The work sessions were divided into two days, so that each day a different activity could be carried out and subsequently triangulate the information obtained from all of them, as well as taking advantage of leisure time to create an atmosphere of community meeting and participation.

Self-Determination and Adult Life

- *Approach*

First, a group dynamic was carried out between the students of the University of Aveiro program and the students of the University of Salamanca program called "Self-determination and adult life".

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The objective was to deepen the students' experiences in three vital areas: housing, employment and leisure/partner, and to generate a debate through which the students could express their wishes in these three areas. The dynamics provided insight into how university programs and the immediate context can facilitate the inclusion and employability of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and at the same time, it was used to promote a key component of this type of program, self-determination.

To carry out the dynamics, the students were organized into three mixed working groups (in each group, students from both universities) working in different areas of the university, so that each of them could work on each of the three axes during a period of time of approximately thirty minutes.

Students provided input on four questions:

1. How would you like it to be?
2. What is it like now?
3. How can the University help you to make it the way you want it to be?
4. How can your family help you to make it the way you want it to be?

All of them are related to the three axes mentioned above: housing, employment and leisure/partnership.

- *Results obtained*

With respect to **housing**, when students are asked how they would like their home to be, most agree that they would like to share it with other people and not live alone.

In addition, many of the students who prefer to share housing express their desire to do so with other classmates instead of family members, although some of the students indicate that they would like to continue living with their parents, siblings, etc., mainly because of the help they provide them. All of them agree that they would keep their town, city and country as their place of residence.

One of the things they value most in housing is that it should be a place where they can have greater independence and autonomy. Some of the participants have focused a lot on the type of housing they would like: a large house, with spaces for leisure, etc.; although the vast majority have not expressed this desire.

Currently, most of the students live in the family home, which they say is an advantage because they do not have to bear all the burden of household chores, maintenance and financial burden of the house, etc. Again, they refer to the desire to become independent and to be able to share their home with other classmates or partners. Some students do live with other classmates or with their partner, but they are few.

They state that university programs can help to promote independence in terms of housing, from learning and managing basic and instrumental daily living skills, household chores, basic aspects of daily economy and, fundamentally, offering the necessary training to get a job and be able to support themselves economically in an autonomous manner.

Regarding environmental support, they highly value the fact that their immediate environment (mainly their family) supports them in initiating the process of independence and accompanies them in the initial stages of the tasks involved in promoting independent living. They state that, although they want to move to a home independent from the family home, they want to continue counting on the support of their family for certain activities: going to the doctor, managing the monthly budget, etc.

Regarding **employment**, most students are quite clear about what they would like their jobs to be like. Most of them adjusted to very realistic possibilities. They name various jobs such as janitor, working with children, clinic assistant, IT world, etc.

Currently, most of the students are not working because they are immersed in a training process. They are aware that they are on the road to employment and attach great importance to training. Some of the students are preparing for competitive examinations.

The university degrees provide very important help in order to start the process of finding and obtaining a job, as well as to obtain adequate training. In addition, the students state that it will be very important for the University to provide the necessary support through the involvement of all the professionals involved in the training and also for job training.

As for the help that their environment can provide in finding a job, they say that support in the search process is very important, as well as encouragement to continue training in order to be able to opt for jobs that are increasingly closer to their tastes and interests. Also, they express the important economic support that is often provided by their close environment, generally their families, during the beginning of the process of searching for and finding a job.

With respect to **leisure/partner**, students are quite clear about the type of leisure they would like to enjoy. It is mainly based on social activities shared with friends and peers and taking advantage of community resources. In addition, they point out the importance of getting to know other new places and also expanding their friendship circles. Some students point out the importance of learning to enjoy leisure time alone.

The majority of students indicate that their ideal leisure and couple plots are similar to the current ones. Sharing day-to-day moments with friends and family in social gatherings and through games, communication on social networks, etc.

University degrees can help students to improve their leisure/partner environments mainly from a social point of view. The mere fact of attending university already generates many social opportunities: meeting new people, sharing community spaces, participating in new activities, etc. In addition, they point out an interesting aspect such as the management and resolution of possible conflicts that may arise in social relationships.

For all this, the fact that the close environment (family and friends) supports them and is close by to help them if they need it is something that generates confidence. In addition, they point out on different occasions that the role of families is very important

when it comes to giving freedom and autonomy to choose and enjoy leisure; as well as economic support to be able to enjoy leisure during university education.

Group interview. Proposals for improvement of the training programs

- *Approach*

Secondly, a group interview was carried out between the students of the University of Aveiro program and the students of the University of Salamanca program, with the aim of finding out the students' vision of the training program offered, as well as the different proposals for improvement to be implemented in the next editions of the programs.

The students were divided into two groups, mixing students from the University of Salamanca and students from the University of Aveiro. Therefore, two group interviews were carried out with the aim of finding out the aspects that the students would improve in four main areas: (1) Program contents: programming, activities, internship period and teachers, (2) Support and facilitators encountered, (3) Barriers in daily life and (4) Work impact.

- *Results obtained*

Regarding the **content of** the **program**, the students commented that it is a university training program that allows them to learn and consolidate the management of basic and instrumental skills for daily life, for example, money management, use of urban transportation, and participate in the activities and means that the community makes available to them.

In addition, they point out that it works from a program of adapted contents, which includes aspects that are often a particular demand of the participants and their families, such as the use of ICT's, basic aspects of daily economy, aspects related to time management, emotional regulation, communication skills, etc.

This degree generates significant changes in the daily life of the participants, both at a personal, family and social level, as well as promotes a significant increase in the personal autonomy of the participant.

However, the students also propose some improvements such as the timing and choice of the internship site.

Most students agree that the internship period is short, since when the internship ends is the moment when they show greater security and autonomy in the development of their work. Also, they point out that the possibility could be studied of dividing the internships in two different places, performing different tasks in order to have more work experience.

Regarding the development of contents in the classroom sessions, the students point out that the classes should be based on practice, since this way it is easier to consolidate knowledge. Also, in relation to the follow-up of the same, the use of a guide or power point that can be projected and viewed during the teacher's explanation helps the comprehension process.

The following **proposals for improvement** are proposed:

- Consider the possibility of extending the duration of the course, for example, with another academic year to expand the contents of some parts of the program that are more complex, such as money management.
- Increase the length of the internship period.
- Diversify the tasks performed in the internship. To be able to access two different internship entities.
- Encourage the practical part in all the sessions to help to consolidate the knowledge.

Regarding the **support received**, the students commented that having a tutor who becomes the person of reference during the stay at the University generates a lot of confidence.

Also important is the role of the different teachers who adapt to the specific and general needs of the students during the course. Regarding the materials, they have the necessary adaptations to favor the follow-up and comprehension of the classes.

In addition, both the mentors and most of the university community with whom they have shared spaces have been an important point of support in the day-to-day life on campus. However, some participants commented that, although they have had the support of their mentor in other ways, they have hardly been able to meet with him/her due to the incompatibility of schedules between the two.

As for the internship period, all the personnel of the places where the internships have been carried out have supported the process of adaptation and follow-up of the internships and have provided the necessary support at all times.

The following proposals for improvement are proposed:

- Carry out a better follow-up of the mentoring process. For example, by proposing the creation of a short report of activities shared between the mentor and the student.
- Visual aids to improve class follow-up, for example, always projecting a small guide or power point with the most important contents (not too much information), so that students can have it as a reference while following the explanation.
- Always complement theoretical learning with issues that support the beginning of independent living: money management, basic activities of daily living related to personal autonomy tasks such as cooking or organizing the home, etc.

In terms of **perceived barriers**, students say that it is sometimes difficult to move around the campus without getting lost, as the directions to the classrooms are not always clear. In addition, with respect to travel to the campus, some students comment on the economic cost they must assume to benefit from these programs, since they live outside the campus.

They also comment that more emphasis should be placed on some subjects if they are more complicated, since the students report difficulties in achieving the English objectives and aspects such as money management on several occasions. Perhaps more time could be devoted to the practical part of these subjects.

In addition, they point out that the emergence of Covid19 has led to certain restrictions when it comes to carrying out on-campus activities or practical tasks within the classroom.

The following proposals for improvement are proposed:

- Adapt the spaces of the University in terms of signage, so as to promote cognitive accessibility throughout the campus. In addition, it would be interesting to be able to do this with students.
- Extending certain sessions, for example, sessions where monetary aspects are worked on. These, for example, are complex and not all objectives are achieved.
- As far as possible, to train the staff working in the Universities, as well as the students on disability issues, so that they can respond to certain difficulties that may arise in the day-to-day life of the students.

As for the **labor impact**, students say that the internships have been satisfactory, although company personnel are not always accustomed to sharing tasks with people with intellectual disabilities and sometimes do not know how to address them. This type of training promotes that companies and society in general know the potential of people with disabilities.

In addition, having studied at the University means that, on many occasions, the participants decide to continue studying other types of training: competitive examinations, vocational training, etc. They also comment that the course helps to work on aspects such as meeting work schedules, increasing the responsibilities entrusted to people with disabilities, managing in a non-habitual context, etc.

In addition, most of the students see themselves working in positions similar to the places where they have done their internships and although most of them report that they have not yet received job offers (many have not started the active job search process), they do know what procedures to follow to start an active job search.

The following proposals for improvement are proposed:

- To train workers and company managers on disability issues, with the aim of making them more familiar with the people who will come to their workplace for internships. Also with the aim of eliminating prejudices and promoting the subsequent hiring of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Immediate follow-up at the end of the course, for those students whose priority objective is to find a job. Preparation of the interview process and active search, registration in employment exchanges, etc.

Framework for developing higher education programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Spain.

Background

On December 19th 2013, the Spanish Government presented the National Youth Guarantee Plan to the European Commission. This plan is aligned with the Spanish Strategy of Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment which contains a common set of actions that will be developed within the context of The Youth Employment Operational Program, one of the main financial resources of the EU to finance the application of the Youth Guarantee Plan.

The Youth Employment Operational Program (2014-2020) seeks to reduce the youth unemployment rate in Spain through the improvement of qualifications and the promotion of employment and self-employment. The target audience is unemployed young population, ranging from 16 to 30 years old. They must be not participating in any other education or training activities. The ONCE Foundation, whose mission is to promote social inclusion of individuals with disability through training and employment, was designated as an Intermediate Body of the Youth Employment Operational Program by means of a delegation of functions dated July 26th, 2016. As an intermediate body, ONCE Foundation seeks to involve Universities as decisive agents in social inclusion of individuals with disabilities enrolled in the National Youth Guarantee System by developing higher education programs focused on promoting employment opportunities and fostering social inclusion of young people with intellectual disabilities, whose opportunities when accessing employment settings are significantly reduced when compared to other persons with disability. To that end, a public call is announced every year by ONCE Foundation. Details of this call are explained in the next section.

In this context, more than 30 Spanish universities, since 2017, have developed training programs for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Purpose of the call

The object and purpose of ONCE Foundation program is to provide funding to Spanish universities to develop and implement Higher Education Programs that promote

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employment and inclusion within the University environment of young people with intellectual disabilities enrolled in the National Youth Guarantee System.

The programs should have the following goals:

- Provide university training to young people with intellectual disabilities focused on improving their autonomy, academic training and job preparation.

- Provide young people with intellectual disabilities the necessary skills and competencies to increase their possibility of entering the job market and accessing jobs by means of supported employment or ordinary employment.

- Provide inclusive experiences within the University Community.

- Facilitate comprehensive and personalized training so they can participate as full members in their community.

- Involve Spanish universities in the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities through training and employment opportunities.

Beneficiaries

Spanish universities (or centres related to them), that are in condition and wish to develop a university program for young people with intellectual disabilities enrolled in the National Youth Guarantee System.

Individuals with intellectual disability enrolled in these programs should meet the following requirements:

- Have an intellectual disability, officially recognized by the competent body of their Autonomous Community after appropriate assessment. This evaluation takes into account different factors that might affect daily living, and ends with an assessment of the degree to which the person's daily activities are affected. This degree is expressed as a percentage, 33% being necessary for the disability to be officially recognized.

- Have turned 18 in the year in which the program will start or be under 30 years old.

- Be a beneficiary of the National Youth Guarantee System prior to the start of the course. Documentation proving participation in the National Youth Guarantee System must be issued no later than 15 days before the start of the program.

Requirements: Definition and characteristics of the Programs

The participating Universities must meet the following requirements and design the programs according to the following criteria:

1. Programs must be taught as university degrees. Programs should be aimed at providing academic training courses to reinforce employability, improve social and employability skills and promote labour inclusion.

2. Each University should present only one proposal (one program) to the call. If a University presents more than one proposal, none of them will be reviewed, due to non-compliance with the bases of the call.

3. The application must be signed by the Rector of the University.

4. The program should have at least four school days a week and must be taught within the University Campus, so students can participate in University life. It is recommended, because of the collaborative synergies that could be generated, that the classes take place in the Faculties of Education, Psychology, or Social Work.

5. The program must start in the first quarter of the academic year, and no later than November 15th.

6. Faculty who will teach the courses may have the corresponding recognition in their teaching load, according to the criteria internally agreed by each university. Faculty should preferably belong to the following areas of knowledge: Psychology, Education, Social Education, Social Work and / or Labour Relations, although the participation of teaching staff from other faculties will be valued, given the interdisciplinary nature of the courses.

7. Taking into account the characteristics of the students, the course must also have the necessary support staff. Among the functions of the support staff will be tutorial action, document management, adaptations, individualized behavioural support plans, interviews with families, support during internships and

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assistance in collecting data regarding each participant and their report to ONCE Foundation. The programs presented must specify the support staff they will have.

8. The funding will be used for the program to be carried out during the academic year and will cover the costs of developing the course. Students must be exempt from paying any fees.

9. The ONCE Foundation grants will cover the cost of those programs that, at the beginning of the course, have a minimum of 12 students and a maximum of 15. Exceptionally, the University may admit up to a maximum of 3 students more, as long as it assumes their cost.

10. Universities, referring to this call, will carry out the appropriate publicity actions to make this program known to potential beneficiaries, indicating the requirements to participate in it, as well as the means to conduct the registration. It will not be an essential requirement for students to have a certain previous academic qualification.

11. The selection of the students will correspond to each university. In order to do this Universities can approach intellectual disability organizations in their area, which must expressly agree to collaborate in the program. Universities will assess the suitability of the candidates and make decisions regarding their selection. However, participants should be able to autonomously move to the university, have basic academic skills with minimal literacy and numeracy skills, express a desire to be taught and appropriate social behaviour to ensure inclusion in an environment such as the university. Likewise, a balance between men and women must be taken into account in the selection.

12. The program should consist of a first part focused on general training and a second part of specialized training oriented towards employment. Overall, the program should be aimed at improving employability of people with intellectual disabilities by acquiring the necessary skills and competencies so that their incorporation into the labour market is possible. Therefore, the program should be focused on job preparation and organized in functional and professional subjects or courses, as well as emotional training and social skills. The program

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should promote comprehensive training, so students can achieve personal development and increase their autonomy.

13. Universities must participate in periodic research, to be coordinated by the ONCE Foundation, with the aim of evaluating the development and impact of the programs and move forward to a global strategy for the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. The Universities will take responsibility and report data about the professional and personal situation of each participant to the ONCE Foundation. Information should be provided at the beginning of the program, its end, and 6 months after its end. The ONCE Foundation will make available to the Universities a computerized tool for data collection and reporting. Providing this information constitutes a mandatory requirement established by the European Social Fund, so any failure by the Universities to comply with it will result in a serious violation of the terms of this call.

Duration and methodology of the Programs

1. The programs must contain at least 30 ECTS credits per course.

The study plan and subjects must promote the following learning goals:

- Acquire and apply the concepts, theories and principles of problem solving and decision making.
- Acquire socio-labour commitments that contribute to their growth as full citizens.
- Acquire and demonstrate social and emotional skills needed to successfully participate in different environments and work as a team
- Acquire information and communication technology management skills that allow them to effectively solve tasks related to their work
- Develop flexible attitudes and the ability to adapt to change
- Successfully participate in internships in ordinary employment settings.

These learning objectives can be pursued in the following subjects:

- Specific / vocational training
- Training in job skills

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- Communication training, social and emotional skills, cognitive training.
- Internships with job coaches which will introduce them to supported employment to further achieve ordinary employment. The internships can be offered within the University context.

2. Funding provided by ONCE Foundation is limited to annual calls. The programs, however, may comprehend two academic years if they are designed to advance in more specialized student training. In these cases, students must be the same in both courses. Universities must justify each academic year and apply for funding for the second academic year in the next call of proposals.

3. Methodology:

Without prejudice to the methodologies that may be developed by the teaching team of each university, at least the following methodological issues must be taken into account:

- *Universal Design for Learning*: Teaching must be inclusive, which implies a didactic approach that responds to the training needs of all students. The materials and activities designed must be accessible to all students.
- *Tutorial actions*: All students must have a reference tutor. Tutors' function will be to accompany and guide the students and their families during their formative stage for an optimal performance in the program.
- *Learning-service*: It is recommended to promote the use of methodologies that encourage learning from volunteer experiences, thus achieving social participation and curricular learning.
- *Cooperative learning*: Teaching techniques based on cooperation are recommended to show students how to support each other and establish common learning goals that allow them to live with diverse people.
- *Problem-based learning*: The European Higher Education Area promotes a competency-based learning model. Learning of transversal competences is recommended to help students to make decisions about specific problems that may be found in the future.
- *Training seminars*: Invited experts can participate in the program and develop specific training seminars about a topic of interest for the students. These

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seminars may be oriented to reinforce some important contents for students' future employability.

- *Flexible groupings*: The diversity of students' competencies may require some courses to be developed in flexible groups.

Funding amounts

The program is co-financed by both the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund through the Youth Employment Operational Program, being the ONCE Foundation the Intermediate Body of the aforementioned Operational Program. The Universities benefiting from this call will receive a maximum amount of 4,000 euros for each student who completes the program (must attend at least 80% of the total hours of the program). Each university may receive a maximum of 60,000 euros for the development of an annual training program.

Employment outcomes

The universities participating in ONCE Foundation calls have included in their training programs an internship at the universities themselves and / or in ordinary external companies. Universities have developed these internships so far following the methodology of supported employment, hiring job coaches to support students.

Some of the external companies in which the students have carried out their internships have hired them at the end of the training. The contracts made immediately upon completion of the training process demonstrate the usefulness of these courses to achieve the ultimate goal of autonomy and employment inclusion for young people with intellectual disability.

Conclusion

The evaluation and impact of the programs carried out so far has been highly positive for all the participants involved: young people with intellectual disabilities, their families, the entire university community (teachers, students, service personnel, etc.) disability organizations and companies. In this sense, it should be noted that the best valued item

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(score of 4.76 out of 5) by the students in the final questionnaire developed by ONCE Foundation, corresponds to question 9, which ask them about the general opinion of the course. The vast majority of students, 9 out of 10, found the course interesting and would recommend it to a family member, friend or acquaintance.

Young people with intellectual disability are gaining the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to access ordinary employment. They feel like any other student in a privileged socializing environment such as the university, and they are also graduating as other university students do, which contributes to their self-esteem, professional expectations and job opportunities.

Other identified best practices and resources

InclusiveU - Syracuse University - School of Education

Syracuse University is known around the world as a leader in disability and higher education. At SU, we celebrate disability because it makes our campus stronger, more diverse and much more interesting; until everyone is included, there will be no true inclusion for anyone. InclusiveU is an initiative of the Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education, committed to individualized and inclusive higher education opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

https://taishoffcenter.syr.edu/inclusiveu

Open University of the United Kingdom

The Open University (OU) is a British public research university and the largest in the UK by student numbers. Most of the OU's undergraduate students are based in the UK and study mainly off-campus; many of its courses (both undergraduate and postgraduate) can also be studied anywhere in the world. There are also a number of full-time postgraduate research students based on the 48-acre university campus in Milton Keynes.

The Disabled Students Group is run by a group of students from all faculties: some undergraduate and some graduate. We are all students with disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health problems that can and do cause problems with respect to our ability to study to the fullest.

Like other units of the OU Student Association, the Group receives a budget and other support that enables it to articulate the needs of students with health and disability issues.

https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/disability

https://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/strategy-and-policies/policies-and-statements/website-accessibility-open-university

https://www.oustudents.com/disabled-students-group

Trinity College Dublin - Trinity Center for People with Intellectual Disabilities - School of Education

The Trinity Center for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID), located in the School of Education at Trinity College Dublin, aims to promote the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in education and society. Our mission is to enable people with intellectual disabilities to develop their potential through a combination of high quality research, dissemination of new knowledge, lifelong learning and vocational training. The Center offers people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in a higher education program designed to enhance their ability to participate fully in society as independent adults.

https://www.tcd.ie/tcpid/

Inclusive Campus Life (abbreviated: IC Life)

The overall goal of the IC Life project is to make life on a higher education campus more inclusive.

More specifically, IC Life promotes and supports the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in university life. To this end, four European universities will develop and implement a concept for the inclusion of young adults with intellectual disabilities on higher education campuses, together with partners experienced in working with people with intellectual disabilities.

Regular higher education students and students with intellectual disabilities will be able to follow their personal path of study while enjoying campus life. People with intellectual disabilities will follow courses in line with their aspirations and participate in teaching activities as life experts. As such, they will teach students in higher education.

"How to make your campus more inclusive?": materials, training and dissemination activities will document and transfer these innovative practices to other European universities and stakeholders in a sustainable way.

https://www.iclife.eu/

CVO Included

This project examined what is needed to achieve inclusive adult education for people with intellectual disabilities. To this end, pilot projects were implemented in different grades of two Adult Education Centers (CVO). These pilot projects formed the basis for the development of a script.

This script is intended for Adult Education Centers in Flanders which, as part of their diversity policy, are looking for inspiration to make their courses accessible to people with intellectual disabilities. By analogy with the "socialization of care" (Decruynaere (ed.), 2013), "socialization of inclusive adult education" will also be a way to involve other actors to make an inclusive process scalable and feasible. We are thinking of incorporating fellow students, external support staff, volunteers, informal caregivers, home-based counseling services, supported work services, etc.

https://www.thomasmore.be/praktijkgericht-onderzoek/mobilab-care/cvo-inclusief

Model Program to Support Independent Living (MAVI)

MAVI is a pilot project in the Portuguese Republic co-financed by the European Social Fund, which materializes with the provision of personal assistance to people with disabilities, through Centers for Support for Independent Living (CAVI). This is highlighted in the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2021 - 2025, in its strategic axis 5 - Promotion of Autonomy and Independent Living. It is understood that the MAVI is a mechanism for the recognition and mobilization of the individual capabilities of persons with disabilities for a decisive and determining role in their lives and the different contexts that are part of it, with which it is intended to

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consolidate a policy that counteracts the institutionalization of persons with disabilities and family dependence. This program is consigned in the Decree-Law 129/2017, of October 9.

Personal assistance, mentioned above, is thus a personalized and specialized service provided by a personal assistant, which can be indicated in different contexts, depending on the understanding of the person with a disability to whom this support is addressed. These different contexts include support in activities of daily living, social participation, communicative mediation or even socio-labor and socio-cultural mediation.

The disabled person requesting this program receives support from the CAVI technical team, which selects a qualified personal assistant to meet the individual needs identified. This assistance service does not exceed 40 hours per week. Within the group of people with disabilities, those who have a certified degree of disability equal to or greater than 60%, are over 16 years of age or have an Intellectual Disability, mental illness or Autism Spectrum Disorder from the age of 16, regardless of the degree of disability, can access this program.

https://www.admestrela.pt/mavi-modelo-de-apoio-a-vida-independente/

How to hire people with disabilities - Toolbox for companies, by Grace - Empresas Responsables

As much as companies may want to contribute, they do not always have the necessary knowledge for a real integration of people with disabilities. Providing company managers and employees with useful and practical tools is therefore an important step towards solving a problem that every responsible company must address. The last decade has seen positive change worldwide, in structural areas such as education, employment, social protection and discrimination. However, people with disabilities continue to face numerous barriers throughout their lives, seriously hindering their full inclusion and active participation in society. Many of these barriers are physical, but the main and most difficult to resolve are those based on ignorance and social prejudices

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related to disability, especially regarding abilities and skills. Many argue that the labor integration of people with disabilities is a determining factor in combating stereotypes due to the affective bonds that arise, as well as in obtaining the social status that is required, opening the doors for the vindication of many other rights.

Thus, the employability of people with disabilities goes far beyond mandatory compliance with the legal framework or corporate social responsibility.

This toolkit is designed to improve the quality of employment and increase cooperation between organizations and institutions by fostering

The development of innovative practices fills a gap that has been felt for a long time. It is based on 5 key steps:

1. Strategic commitment
2. Preparing for action
3. Recruitment and selection
4. Welcoming and integration
5. Developing lasting relationships

This toolkit offers practical advice on how to comply with applicable legislation, develop strategies to promote inclusion, design inclusive recruitment processes, identify and overcome barriers to the integration of people with disabilities, whether physical, communicative or behavioral, collaborate with social organizations that promote the integration, employability and employment of people with disabilities, and delve into good practices using examples of successful inclusion.

https://grace.pt/

Guide for Inclusive Recruitment, by APPDI - Portuguese Association for Diversity and Inclusion

An online guide that provides all organizations with tools to improve inclusive hiring in a diverse workplace (focusing on competencies rather than personal characteristics such as disability, gender or age).

To put it into practice, a 5-phase procedure is suggested (with specific information on the steps, real cases and useful tips for each phase): 0 - Preparation of the hiring process; 1- Hiring; 2- Onboarding; 3- Follow-up; 4- Exit.

https://www.appdi.pt/

Inclusive employer seal

The Inclusive Employer Seal is a public distinction awarded every two years to employers who have open and inclusive practices in relation to people with disabilities.

Employers' inclusive practices are validated by analyzing four main areas: (1) Recruitment, career progression and development; (2) Retention and re-employment; (3) Accessibility; (4) Service provided and relationship with the community.

https://www.iefp.pt/reabilitacao-profissional

The CDS Inclusive Research Network

The Centre for Disability Studies (CDS), a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney, is the host organization for the CDS Inclusive Research Network (CDS IRN), a group of people with different strengths: university researchers, support workers and people with diverse disabilities, developing inclusive research together.

Inclusive research is about people with disabilities - especially intellectual disabilities (ID) - doing research [not having research done on them], in collaboration with people without disabilities. The motto of the CDS Inclusive Research Network is: "Nothing about us without us."

The CDS IRN is a group of people interested in research to learn more about the experiences of people with disabilities. Some of them have ID. They all work together as "co-researchers," meaning they support each other. Co-research values the experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities as experts on their own lives.

As early as 2010, they held a series of workshops on research skills, after which they decided to form a joint research group.

The CDS Inclusive Research Network completed research projects on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Australia) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They presented their research findings at conferences in Australia and overseas. In 2018, they worked on two new research projects, namely:

- The publication project: reviewing ways in which the inclusive research group can make its voice heard in the peer-reviewed literature.
- "My Story, My Voice": Life since the NDIS project* and Self Advocates & Human Rights project.

* The NDIS Sector Development Project (SDP), funded by the Victorian Government, works to build the capacity of Victoria's disability service providers to operate in the NDIS environment.

https://cds.org.au/promoting-inclusion/inclusive-research/

PROMENTOR Program of Fundación PRODIS and the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

The Promentor program was created in 2005 at the initiative of professionals from the Prodis Foundation and professors from the Universidad A de M. with the following objectives:

- Collaborate with people with intellectual disabilities in the design of their Life Projects through individualized plans based on the methodology of Person Centered Planning (PCP).
- To provide job training, adjusted to individual differences, to enable them to be included in the labor market in an ordinary company.
- To provide a continuous Supported Employment service, which promotes equal opportunities in the incorporation, maintenance and promotion of the job.

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- To provide continuous lifelong training for workers exercising their right to work in the ordinary company.
- To provide the necessary supports so that workers with intellectual disabilities can enjoy their free time participating as full members of their community.

Its first action was the implementation of the "Training Course for the labor inclusion of young people with intellectual disabilities" at the UAM. Over the following four years, the program underwent several competitive research projects, funded by the Community of Madrid, which evaluated its effectiveness and provided indicators for improvement.

In 2009 the "Training Course for Labor Inclusion" is recognized by the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid as its own degree, becoming the only degree of its kind in our country. In February 2010 the UAM awarded a Chair of Sponsorship to the Prodis Foundation, sponsor of the Promentor program, for its work in favor of research on the social and labor inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. In June 2013, the seventh graduating class graduated and so far, among the seven graduating classes, there is an employability rate of 92%.

All students who have graduated from this course go on to the "Supported Employment" program of the Prodis Foundation, which provides them with the necessary support to enter the labor market. Likewise, the workers continue their training at the UAM through the Lifelong Learning Program: "Updating and improvement of social and labor skills".

https://fundacionprodis.org/programas-servicios/promentor/

DEMOS Project of the Universidad Pontifica de Comillas and Fundación Repsol Down Madrid

This is a program that Comillas Pontifical University directs to adults with Intellectual Disabilities whose objective is general and specific training, from a humanistic perspective, in various professional profiles in order to promote future inclusion in the normal work environment. The training programs are:

- Training Program for Auxiliary Technician in Educational Environments
- Training Program Technical Assistant in Technological Environments

The selected professional profiles respond to a long experience in the field of training and labor integration developed by the Down Syndrome Foundation of Madrid for almost two decades. These profiles, on the one hand, comprise a typology of tasks and functions sufficiently varied in complexity and cognitive, social and manipulative demands that can be graduated to adapt to the characteristics of the recipients. On the other hand, these profiles are in demand in our labor environment, given the characteristics of the area where the participants will be integrated into the labor market (Community of Madrid).

These are innovative profiles that go beyond the mostly manipulative jobs that have been traditionally developed by people with intellectual disabilities in our country, contributing to promote a more positive social image of the group of people with intellectual disabilities.

The possibility of training for two years in a prestigious university environment provides these students with intellectual disabilities spaces of inclusion in which to develop their potential, optimize their employability profile and interact daily with other university students of similar ages.

This daily coexistence on the university campus of students with different abilities is undoubtedly an enriching opportunity for the entire teaching community; also for those university students, future professionals, who will have the opportunity to share firsthand the experiences, hopes and aspirations of young people with intellectual disabilities, thus learning to coexist, manage and enrich themselves in diversity.

https://www.comillas.edu/catedra-de-familia-y-discapacidad/demos#educademos