PRÓ-INCLUSÃO
ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DE DOCENTES DE EDUCAÇÃO ESPECIAL

International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Quality of Life Special Interest Research Group

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS 'QUALITY OF LIFE: INCLUSION, RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING'

Lisbon, July 21st and 22nd, 2025 | **Book of Abstracts**

CONGRESSO INTERNACIONAL 'QUALIDADE DE VIDA: INCLUSÃO, DIREITOS E BEM-ESTAR Lisboa, 21 e 21 julho 2025 | Livro de Resumos

An electronic publication of the Quality of Life Special Interest Research Group (SIRG) of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

The effects of a 16-week physical exercise program on the psychomotor profile of youth with Down syndrome

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Mara Alves
Affiliation institution: Faculdade de Desporto da Universidade do Porto
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail): marabma99@gmail.com
Co-author(s) name(s)): Raquel Costa; Tânia Bastos

Objective: This study aimed to assess the effects of a 16-week exercise program on the psychomotor profile of youth with Down syndrome. Theoretical framework: The psychomotor development of youth with Down Syndrome is still an underexplored topic in current literature, specifically regarding its connection to exercise. Exercise in persons with Down syndrome promotes improvements in muscle strength, balance, motor coordination, and overall health. In addition, it contributes to the emotional and social well-being, fostering inclusion and quality of life. Methodology: The sample comprised 9 participants from "MOVE-TE 21" program, aged between 8 and 19 years. The “MOVE-TE 21” is a community-based program settled in the Faculty of Sport, University of Porto. This program offers free exercise classes tailored according to the needs and characteristics of children, youth, and adults with Down syndrome. Specifically, it aims to promotes healthy lifestyles and the development of regular exercise routines. A multi-sport activities approach based on small groups intervention is developed to positive impact in the physical and mental health of the participants. The intervention program took place once a week and included activities focused on coordination, balance, strength, flexibility, among other psychomotor components. Data were collected before and after the intervention program using the Vítor da Fonseca Psychomotor Battery (BPM), as well as a sociodemographic questionnaire and anthropometric evaluation tools. Results: Regarding anthropometric measures, the body mass index (BMI) significantly decreased (p=0.028) after the intervention. Concerning the psychomotor profile, all participants showed improvements in the BPM score, but only one participant changed the psychomotor profile type. After intervention, only Tonicity showed significant improvements (p=0.046). Conclusion: Overall, it is possible to suggest that exercise can be an important tool for psychomotor development in youth with Down syndrome, specifically in Tonicity. Future studies could implement exercise programs that span the entire school year and with a higher weekly frequency, enhancing the beneficial effects of exercise on the psychomotor profile.

Keywords: Down Syndrome; Psychomotricity ; Psychomotor Development; Adapted Physical Activity

Transition to post-school life for students with ID: Internationalization, Inclusion, Intentionality and Transferability

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Maria do Rosário de Araújo Ferreira
Affiliation institution: AE Camilo Castelo Branco, V. N. Famalicão
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: 1204@aeccb.pt
Co-author(s) name(s): Paula Cunha Freitas

This presentation addresses the transition to post-school life for students with intellectual disabilities, exploring their expectations and the potential of active and participatory methodologies, such as project work at AECCB and the Erasmus+ program, to optimize this transition to the post-school life process. The research analyzes the relationship between curricular guidelines, the multilevel approach, and the active involvement of students, aiming to demonstrate how participation in international projects can enhance the understanding of curricular content with significant adaptations and facilitate its transferability to post-school life.

The methodology involved the implementation and analysis of projects linked to Erasmus+ mobility, with data collection through participant observation, document analysis, and interviews with students, teachers, and parents. Preliminary results indicate that active participation, especially in international contexts, promotes essential skills for autonomy and social and professional inclusion, stimulating a more meaningful and contextualized appropriation of curricular knowledge.

It can be concluded that the articulation between curriculum guidelines, the multilevel approach, and participation in international projects is a promising pedagogical strategy for fostering students' autonomy and self-determination and supporting their transition to post-school life, promoting their independence, social participation, and application of knowledge in real contexts. The research highlights the importance of integrating these methodologies into educational practices in order to respond effectively to the specific needs of these students and enhance their post-school success.

Keywords: Transition to Post-School Life; Expectations; Transferability; Erasmus+; Inclusion

Inclusion as an individual process

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Aida Araújo Rebelo and Ana Margarida Melo - ASSOL
Affiliation institution: Associação de Solidariedade Social de Lafões - ASSOL
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: aidarebelo@assol.pt; anamelotf@assol.pt

The lack of a tool to assess the inclusion of students with disabilities or impairments in Portugal led the team at ASSOL's Resource Center for Inclusion (CRI) to develop a tool from scratch. It was developed in light of theoretical references on inclusion, self-determination, person-centered planning, and interdependence pedagogy, in an attempt to assess equal opportunities and participation, as well as whether students are fully developing their potential and whether the school accepts individual differences and provides the individualized support and attention necessary for person-centered diversity (Schalock & Verdugo, 2012).

It should be noted that ASSOL's concern with using Person-Centered Planning applies to anyone with a disability or impairment, regardless of age, and always seeks to understand how the person's life context (in this case, school for students) can become more inclusive, adjusting support to the needs of each student. This led to the creation of the Inclusion Checklist (LVI), which is an integral part of the book Pertencer e Participar (Belonging and Participating) (Pereira, 2017), published by ASSOL. Based on data collected from the application of the checklist in the 2020-2021 school year, with 162 students from eight school groups, supported by ASSOL's CRI technicians, aged between 6 and 21, a quantitative, non-experimental, and exploratory study was developed. After the pilot study, in 2022, through an exploratory factor analysis with a sample of 176 students, a scale with 59 items emerged, evaluated on a Likert scale.

In the end, considering the psychometric and theoretical indicators, the best alternative was presented by the principal axis factorization technique, with Promax oblique rotation and the extraction of four factors, with values greater than 1, which explain 48% of the total variance (Factor 1: participation, Factor 2: autonomy, Factor 3: belonging, and Factor 4: self-determination), all with high internal consistency ($\alpha>.90$). Satisfactory values were also observed in the sample adequacy measure (KMO=.819) and in Bartlett's sphericity test ($x2=9327.944$, $p<.000$). Regarding the reliability of the total scale, it presents high internal consistency ($\alpha=.935$).

With regard to the comparative results between the 2022/2023 school year and the 2023/2024 school year, there is a non-significant decrease in terms of participation, autonomy, belonging, and self-determination by students. In conclusion, the analyses carried out over the years revealed that the latest version of the LVI stood out positively, clearly matching the empirical data examined, which is why its use is recommended for assessing the level of student inclusion.

Keywords: Inclusion checklist, student-centered supports, participation, autonomy, belonging, and self-determination.

Inclusive Education: “To walk in the shoes of our students”

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Margarida Belchior
Affiliation institution: Universidade Lusófona
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: margarida.belchior@ulusofona.pt
Co-author(s) name(s): Luzia Lima-Rodrigues, Léa Kellermann Pereira

We will present the results of a brief study conducted with teachers and educators in the fourth edition of an online continuing professional learning course aimed to promote inclusive educational practices. The purpose of this brief research is to understand the impact of a proposal/invitation on the participants, namely to "walk in the shoes of their students" (“role-play”) and to reflect on what they have experienced and learned from this student.

This research has ethnographic characteristics, as it was carried out in the context of online continuing education and the trainers, immersed in the training field, simultaneously assumed the role of researchers. The data analyzed were collected in two ways: by the trainers during the training sessions – their own written records; and from reflective questions sent to the trainees after each session, to which they gave written answers, on the training support platform.

We live in times in which advances in civilization such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) or the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) (CRPD) are questioned. In some European parliaments, discriminatory discourses against people with disabilities or inclusive education policies were heard. According to the CRPD, the concept of disability is a social concept, which is based on the way in which the physical and social environment is prepared (or not) to accommodate and welcome people with disabilities, promoting their active participation and respective human development. The concept that disability is based on individual disabilities and characteristics is outdated.

In today's world, it is important to reflect, improve and investigate educational and inclusive practices that foster empathy and compassion and promote Inclusive Education. These practices are based on the principles and values of inclusive education, such as the right of access and participation of all to learn and develop their potential to the fullest, regardless of their gender, beliefs, nationality, skin color or abilities. These are practices that are also based on active and creative learning methods – Sociodrama – which appeal to

"Encounter", the establishment of social bonds, cooperation, creative and non-violent conflict resolution, "putting yourself in other people's shoes", mutual assistance, empathy and compassion and democratic participation (Blatner, 2019).
The results of the activity in question reveal how it provoked an increased awareness of the roles played by special education teachers, especially because they never gave up on the students in question and always believed that, through the relationship established with both the teacher in question and with other members of the school community, they still had the potential to grow and develop as human beings. Some trainees reflected critically on their insistence, as teachers, on school learning issues.

References:
Belchior, M., Lima-Rodrigues, L., Pereira, L. K., & Manuel, M. A. (2024). A formação contínua sobre Inclusão e Métodos Ativos e Criativos de Aprendizagem. In C. Rocha, D. Rodrigues, M. Loureiro, & M. J. Mogarro (Eds.), Livro de Atas do 8.o Congresso Internacional 50 anos após abril: Diversidade, Equidade e Inclusão. https://congressoandee.weebly.com/uploads/1/6/4/6/16461788/atascongresso50anosaposabril-lisboa2024.pdf
Blatner, A. (2019). Action Explorations - Using Psychodramatic Methods in Non-Therapeutic Settings. Adam Blatner and Parallax Productions

Keywords: Inclusive Education; Continuous Professional Leraning; Inclusive Practices; Creative Action Methods for Learning; Sociodrama.

From Self-Determination to Self-Advocacy: Pathways to Inclusion for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

Oral Communication

Abstract

Authors: Carlo Bortolami, Denise Zucchini, Isabella Valbusa, Sara Santilli
Affiliations: University of Padova
Country: Italy

Self-determination and self-advocacy are key elements in promoting the rights of people with disabilities, particularly in processes of labor inclusion and social participation. This study involved approximately 60 adults with intellectual disabilities participating in a supported employment project in Italy, with the aim of exploring the relationship between these two constructs. Self-determination was assessed through the Italian adaptation of the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI), while self-advocacy was investigated using a semi-structured interview. The combined qualitative and quantitative analysis revealed a significant relationship between levels of self-determination and self-advocacy skills. Participants with higher SDI scores showed greater awareness of their rights, a stronger ability to express preferences and needs, and a more active perception of their role in the workplace. In line with the literature, findings suggest that self-advocacy emerges as a manifestation of self-determination, which serves as a prerequisite for the active agency of people with disabilities in social and professional contexts. The study highlights the value of integrating evaluative and qualitative tools to design individualized empowerment and inclusion interventions.

Keywords: Self-determination, self-advocacy, intellectual disabilities, supported employment, social inclusion, disability rights

Promoting self-determination in the Italian context: a case study.

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Lucia Borsini
Affiliation institution: University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"
Country: Italy
Author e-mail: lucia.borsini@unicampania.it
Co-author(s) name(s)): Noemi Del Bianco, Catia Giaconi

Promoting self-determination is increasingly acknowledged as a critical factor in enhancing everyone's overall well-being and Quality of Life (Shalock, Verdugo Alonso, 2002; Giaconi, 2015). This study presents an ongoing validation of the "Self-Determination Inventory System", specifically designed for students aged 13 to 22, their parents, and teachers/educators, within the Italian educational and cultural context. The Italian process of adaptation and validation of the "Self-Determination Inventory: Student Report version" (SDI: SR) and "Self-Determination Inventory: Parent/Teacher version" (SDI: PR/TR) involved a complex and rigorous methodological approach, divided into several steps to ensure the instrument was culturally and linguistically appropriate for the target context. Specifically, in this conference we will present the data obtained in the pilot phase of the protocol validation for the preliminary version of the SDI: SR and SDI: PR/TR questionnaire, which was administered to a small sample of 75 participants (25 students, 25 parents, and 25 teachers/educators), who were then asked to be involved in a focus group for exploration of the clarity of the items, understanding of the concepts of self-determination and the overall effectiveness of the instrument. The methodology used to analyze the participants' perceptions was the Thematic Analysis framework (Braun, Clarke, 2006; 2021). Specifically, the data analysis was carried out in six structured steps. First, familiarity with the transcribed interviews enabled immersion in the data. Second, initial coding was conducted using MaxQDA. Third, recurring themes were identified, then reviewed in the fourth phase for coherence and consistency. In the fifth phase, themes were clearly defined and named. Finally, the sixth phase involved writing the report, interpreting themes in relation to the study's objectives and theoretical framework. Preliminary results and data triangulation highlight the tool's validity while uncovering congruences and disparities, enriching our comprehension of the intricate dynamics in fostering self-determination. Perceptions analyzed reflect the broader educational challenge of ensuring that the voices of people with disabilities must be heard and meaningfully integrated into their Life Planning processes.

Keywords: Self-determination; students with disability; Quality of

Interculturality and inclusion: motivations and challenges for students in higher education

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Hélia Bracons
Affiliation institution: Instituto de Serviço Social/Universidade Lusófona-Centro Universitário de Lisboa
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: helia.bracons@ulusofona.pt

In recent years, Portuguese universities have been facing new and diverse challenges. One of these challenges relates to the growing number of students from other countries who choose Portugal to complete a stage of their academic career, in this case, a degree in Social Work.

The objective of this exploratory study is to find out: what is their main motivation for studying at a Portuguese university; what challenges they expect to encounter, what they expect from their academic training, and what their perception is of the practical training in their chosen course.

It also aims to offer a brief reflection on intercultural education, highlighting the importance of cultural diversity in the university context, and acknowledging the relevance of interaction between students from diverse cultures.

In methodological terms, the focus group technique was applied in the classroom context to students from other countries enrolled in the first year who entered the 2024/2025 academic year at the University in the Social Work course, totaling eight students from Angola, Brazil, Guinea, Mozambique, and São Tomé (out of a total of 52 students).

This study allows us to advance the idea that cultural diversity at the University in question enhances educational experience. The students emphasize that the main reason for choosing the University to continue their studies was the cultural diversity that exists there, as they feel identified and recognized with the socio-educational and cultural context.

Keywords: Higher education, cultural diversity, interculturality, and social inclusion.

Understanding Quality of Life in adults with Cerebral Palsy: A systematic review of conceptual foundations and assessment practices

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Olena Brito
Affiliation institution: Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: debritoolena@gmail.com
Co-author(s) name(s): Sofia Santos

Quality-of-Life (QOL) has been recognized as a valid framework enabling the measurement, implementation and monitoring of rights. It offers a comprehensive understanding of the people with disabilities' experiences, allowing for the policy and service effectiveness' evaluation, through a person-centered lens. QOL is also recognized as a measurable personal outcome worldwide, applicable for all, including the so-called vulnerable groups, such as people with Cerebral Palsy (CP), a non-progressive neurological condition that leads to various musculoskeletal system disorders, affecting movement/posture, limiting functional capacity and causing activity restrictions. The associated impairments of CP typically worsen with age. Adults with CP may experience increased limitations, further complicating their ability to meet environmental demands and impacting QOL. Despite national efforts to advance the study of QOL, especially among people with intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) or with children, significantly less attention has been paid to adults with CP. Addressing this gap, our systematic review had two main goals: analyze the current state-of- the-art of the conceptualization of QOL, and identify the instruments commonly used to assess QOL in adults with CP and/or physical disabilities. This critical reflection contributes to the deepening of conceptual understanding regarding these adults and proposed a new approach for QOL assessment in this target population. A systematic review was conducted to identify relevant literature published between 2017-2025. Databases consulted included: PubMed, CINAHL, and PsycINFO. Inclusion criteria were quantitative and qualitative studies, involving participants with CP and/or physical/motor disability; aged >18years; self- and/or proxy-reported QOL considered an intervention outcome (primary or secondary), regardless the type of intervention. The search strategy combined keywords and Boolean operators: quality-of-life AND cerebral palsy OR physical/motor disability OR mobility impairment AND (young) adults OR patients OR persons OR people. Titles and abstracts were screened according to eligibility criteria. From an initial pool of 3325 studies, and after removing duplicates and grey literature, a final sample of 30 studies was selected. Each study was analyzed by the main researcher and cross-checked by the lead researcher. In cases of disagreements, a third researcher was asked for consensus. More than half of the studies did not provide any QOL' definition; only one study demonstrated a consistent alignment between conceptual definition and instrument used. Regarding assessment procedures, a trend toward the use of generic instruments was observed: often tools initially developed for children/adolescents with CP or for another vulnerable group (e.g., IDD). No instrument specifically designed for adults with CP was identified. Conceptual limitation (e.g., diversity of definitions and models, non-inclusion of domains such as engagement and satisfaction, and an overemphasis on components like mobility…) and methodological weaknesses (e.g., focus on children/adolescents, small samples, proxy-reports' reliance, lack of psychometric validation) were identified. Findings have practical implications for services, practices, and policy-making in the field of CP, from the micro (monitoring individual progress and establishing personalized support plans) to meso (informing the restructuring of organizations and supports provision), to the macro level - recommending public policy and disability service reforms aimed at improving the QOL of this population. Recommendations will be presented.

Keywords: Quality of Life; Conceptualization; Assessment; Cerebral Palsy; Physical disability; Adults; Rights; Well-Being

Understanding How Context Shapes Goal Pursuit in Adults with Cerebral Palsy

Oral Communication

Abstract

Authors: Maria Carneiro1, André Oliveira2, Beatriz Magalhães3, Marta Sam João3, Sandra Mesquita3 e Pedro Rosário1
Affiliation institution: 1 Centro de Investigação em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho; 2 Centro de Investigação em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho; Departamento de Psicologia e Educação, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade da Beira Interior; 3 Departamento de Educação e Psicologia, Escola de Ciências Humanas e Sociais, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro

Country: Portugal

Author e-mail: mariahcarneiro11@gmail.com

How do adults with cerebral palsy (CP) navigate the pursuit of life goals when environments are not neutral but participate actively in shaping self-determination? This study explores this question by examining the complex interplay between one's agency and contextual influence, particularly in individuals with a typical cognitive development but whose physical impairments impose daily constraints. Based on Causal Agency Theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, this research frames self-determination as a process rooted in both individual capabilities and external conditions. For adults with CP, environments can function either as facilitators or barriers to autonomy, inclusion, and well-being. This study aims to understand how contexts such as family, education, employment, and broader sociocultural factors impact the way individuals define, pursue, and reflect on their life goals. Using a qualitative approach, adult participants with CP were selected through their score in the Self-Determination Inventory: Adult Report (SDI:AR), and then invited to participate in a semi-structured interviews conducted by the research team, aiming to examine their experiences in setting, pursuing, and achieving personal and meaningful goals. Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach to identify patterns related to contextual influences, including personal, social, and structural factors that shape self-determined behaviors. Preliminary findings point to the influential role of the microsystem (i.e., family members, peers, therapists, and educators) in encouraging and asserting volitional and agentic behaviors. At the same time, structural and cultural barriers at the meso- and macrosystemic levels continue to hinder the full expression of self-determination, even if in some cases fostering it. This research contributes to the broader debate on quality of life, rights, and inclusion by expanding the lived experiences of a population often left out of research focused on autonomy. Highlights communication, both interpersonal and institutional, as a vital component in enabling individuals with CP to exercise choices, set goals, and advocate for themselves. Ultimately, supporting self-determination for this population goes beyond developing individual skills. It requires intentional and inclusive systems that recognize the role of context in shaping life trajectories. These findings offer practical insights for researchers, educators, and policymakers committed to promoting dignity, participation, and well-being at all stages of life.

Keywords: Self-determination, Context, Life Goals, Casual Agency Theory, Cerebral Palsy

Connecting knowledge: a classroom experience with inclusive education

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Camila da Silva Conceição
Affiliaton institution: Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio de Janeiro - Campus Pinheiral
Country: Brasil
Author e-mail: camila.conceicao@ifrj.edu.br
Co – author name: Santiago, Bianca Leandro

Historically, people with disabilities have faced countless challenges and barriers over time. Despite the progress made, exclusion is still present in everyday life, representing an obstacle to the construction of a truly inclusive society. This report aims to share the experience of the FIC (Initial and Continuing Education) course for Supermarket Operators at the IFRRJ (Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio de Janeiro – Pinheiral Campus).

The course trains students to work in supermarkets, with activities involving restocking, organisation and strategic display of products at points of sale, as well as good practices in food handling. The class consisted of 22 students, 10 of whom (aged between 34 and 47) came from APAE – Pinheiral (Association of Parents and Friends of the Exceptional), an institution that supports people with intellectual and multiple disabilities. Among these students, five were illiterate.

The proposal aimed to promote the preparation and qualification of people with disabilities for the labour market. The methodology adopted was action research, structured in stages that involved the development of materials adapted for illiterate students, through practical classes on microorganisms, the use of pictures, short videos and activities in pairs (literate and illiterate students), valuing individual experience and strengthening mutual learning.

The results indicate that the activity contributed not only to the social and creative development of the students but also provided significant reflections among the teachers. Greater preparation and sensitivity of teachers for teaching students with disabilities and disorders was observed, favoring more inclusive and effective pedagogical practices.

The experience demonstrated that small actions in everyday school life can positively impact the lives of students with disabilities, promoting a more welcoming and egalitarian environment, 'building a bridge between knowledge.' Thus, the FIC Supermarket Operator course reinforces the importance of initiatives that integrate different audiences and encourage the continuing education of educators from the perspective of inclusive education.

Keywords: People with disabilities; inclusive education; supermarket; inclusion.

The Quality of Life (QoL) of Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Transition to Post-school Life.

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Liriane Costa de Oliveira.
Affiliation institution: 1 PhD Student in Education; Universidade Federal do Paraná.
Country: Brazil
Author e-mail: lirianecosta1@hotmail.com
Co-author(s) name(s): Maria de Fátima Joaquim Minetto2; Maria Cristina Marques Ferreira Simões3

This research thesis focuses on 'The quality of life (QoL) of students with intellectual disabilities (ID) in the transition to post-school life (TPSL)', aiming at social, academic and professional inclusion. The Quality of Life (QoL) paradigm is a guiding principle for inclusive education and support provided to students with ID.

The first methodological approach is characterized by a literature review conducted through academic research on the following descriptors: "transition to post-school life," "intellectual disability," "quality of life," "Personal Outcomes Scale," and "transition to post-school life," collected from the Scopus, Web of Science, and BDTD databases, using the PRISMA methodology and the Mendeley reference manager. After empirical analysis of the findings, which totaled 94 articles, only five publications were related to the object of study. Thus, the results revealed that adolescents with ID had a significantly lower perception of their life skills in all areas (independent living, personal money management, community involvement and use, leisure activities, health, and social/interpersonal relationships) than adolescents with other disabilities.

The support mechanisms and quality of life of students with ID in TPSL are based on the impact of personal and contextual factors. Thus, Cristina Simões, in the article 'Validation of the Portuguese version of the Personal Outcomes Scale' (Simões; Santos and Biscaia, 2016), argues that QoL is effectively useful for organizations to guide support plans and improve personal outcomes. Validation through the reports of 1,264 adults with ID and their carers showed evidence of adequate psychometric properties of the QoL dimensions. The results reveal that the Portuguese version (EPR-CJ) can be a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the QoL of adults with ID, serving as a basis for planning and evaluating personalized support.

Regarding the well-being and QoL of people with ID, studies show that it depends on a variety of objective and subjective factors, based on values, attitudes, adaptive, collaborative, and inclusive behaviors that must occur in educational contexts that incorporate the emancipation of autonomy for the TPSL process to be successful, enabling social, academic, and professional inclusion.

The outcome of this bibliographic survey concludes that Quality of Life in TPSL is a complex and challenging process. Therefore, the perspective of the quality of life model in the Transition to Post-School Life process presents can fill a gap in the dialogue on inclusive educational practices for students with intellectual disabilities in Brazil and internationally.

Keywords: quality of life, transition to post-school life, intellectual disability, Personal Outcomes Scale, literature review.

Independent living and quality of life of people with intellectual disability and extensive support needs

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Laura Esteban Sánchez
Affiliation institution: INICO-University of Salamanca
Country: Spain
Author e-mail: lauraestesa@usal.es
Co-author(s) name(s): Patricia Navas; Víctor Arias; Verónica Guillén; Eva Vicente; Laura García; Natalia Alvarado; Miguel Ángel Verdugo

Introduction: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes the right to live independently. However, in Spain, 32,760 people with disabilities live in institutions, where they have a lower level of participation and control over their own lives. Objective: To explore changes in the quality of life of people with significant support needs following a process of deinstitutionalization and promotion of independent living. Method: Participants included 266 individuals with intellectual disabilities (of whom 199 had significant support needs) who moved to 66 community-based homes. The INICO-FEAPS and San Martín quality of life scales were applied before the move, 9 months after, and 18 months after the move. Additionally, results were analyzed based on variables such as gender, age, level of support needs, and origin environment. Results: After the move, there were significant and positive changes in all dimensions of quality of life. The dimensions that grew the most were Self-determination, Emotional Well-being, and Social Inclusion, showing strong changes, followed by other dimensions where moderate changes were observed. Regarding personal variables, only the level of support needs influenced the results in the Emotional Well-being dimension. Conclusion: Living in supported community-based homes brings significant benefits to the quality of life of individuals with intellectual disabilities, including those with greater support needs. Therefore, this study highlights the importance of implementing public policies that prioritize community services and support for this group.

Keywords: Deinstitutionalization; Independent Living; Quality of Life; Rights

The right to engage in the academic field: Views of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Laura Esteban Sánchez
Affiliation institution: INICO-University of Salamanca
Country: Spain
Author e-mail: lauraestesa@usal.es
Co-author(s) name(s): Natalia Alvarado Torres, Virginia Aguayo Romero, Victoria Sánchez-Gómez, Laura García-Domínguez, Blanca Palomero Sierra, Jose White Martin, Carlos Rodriguez Nuñez, Gilberto Ponce Bucarito, Adrián Arnés Martín.

The rights-based approach highlights the importance of personal dignity and the social treatment that people with disabilities require to fully participate in all areas of life. However, despite the value that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) can bring to research processes, their participation in the academic field remains limited. Inclusive research, which promotes the real rights and needs of these individuals, emerges as an effective solution to foster their involvement. Nonetheless, both academic researchers and co-researchers with IDD have identified in previous studies the need for specific research training. Therefore, the aim of this project was to develop a research training program for people with IDD and to create an inclusive research group. At the beginning of the course, the beliefs and expectations of the training participants (17 people with IDD) regarding research, their right to participate in it, and the main needs for this to occur were collected. After completing the course, a qualitative analysis of these expectations was conducted. The results underscore the importance of training, empowerment, and equal opportunities to include people with IDD in the scientific field.

Keywords: Inclusive Research, Training, Participation, Rights

Engaging the Brain through Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST)': A partnership implementing a Feasibility Randomised Controlled Trial for Adults with Intellectual Disability (ID).

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Ms Iara Faria Synnott
Affiliation institution: Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability (TCAID), Trinity College Dublin.
Country: Ireland
Author e-mail: fariasyi@tcd.ie
Co-author(s) name(s): Ms Pavithra, Ms Pamela Dunne, Prof Mary McCarron.

Background: Adults ageing with ID are at higher risk of developing dementia. CST is a widely recognised, evidence-based, non-pharmacological intervention for individuals with mild to moderate dementia. However, the feasibility and impact of group CST for people with ID remains underexplored.
Method: This study aimed to assess the feasibility of implementing group CST in adult day services for persons with ID (PWID). A secondary objective was to examine its impact on cognitive measures, overall functioning, and quality of life.
Ethical approval was obtained from both the host institution and partnering disability service. Study materials were co-developed with the host institution's Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) panel. A total of 30 adults with ID were recruited following screening for eligibility and were randomised to either a CST intervention group or a control group receiving usual care. All participants completed pre and post assessments. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected over a seven-week period.
Findings: A quantitative and qualitative data analysis assessed the feasibility and acceptability of group CST for PWID in day services. Participants showed positive engagement, and preliminary findings suggest potential cognitive and quality of life benefits.
Conclusion and Impact: This study shows that group CST is a promising, feasible non-pharmacological intervention for adults with ID at risk of dementia. These findings support further studies with larger samples to broadly investigate outcomes in cognitive function, quality of life and global functioning. The results were disseminated to participants and families using easy-to-read reports and total communication approaches during user-led exchange events. Participants and families had the opportunity to show their views and experience of CST to researchers and disability service management, and to voice their wishes in continuing to attend CST. The findings of the study were presented at national and international conferences and downloadable reports made available via the host institution

and partner disability service digital platforms. The partner disability service has, since the preliminary findings, agreed to continue to offer CST programmes and to extend them nationally

Keywords: Intellectual Disability, Cognitive Stimulation Therapy, Dementia. Quality of Life.

Validating what matters: content validity of a QOL tool for hypophosphatemia (XLH)

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Vanessa Giovana Vasques
Affiliation institution: Universidade Federal de São Paulo - UNIFESP Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability (TCAID)
Country: Brasil
Author e-mail: vanessa.giovana@unifesp.br
Co-author(s) name(s): Lyvia de Nazaré de Oliveira Barros, Marcia Maria Pires Camargo Novelli, Sofia Santos and Andrea Perosa Saigh Jurdi

Quality of life (QoL) has been recognized as an emerging construct and framework in the field of disability. The construct contributes to better practices and the exercise of citizenship. A particularly vulnerable group in terms of research includes people with hypophosphatemia (XLH), a rare genetic condition caused by the elimination of phosphorus from the body that leads to limitations in daily life, with an impact on mental health, functionality and reduced social participation. The QoL of this group is still poorly understood and studied. Based on the most recent conceptualizations - which emphasize QoL as a multidimensional construct, incorporating objective and subjective components, influenced by personal and social factors - and the scarcity of evidence on QoL assessment processes for people with XLH, we set out to develop a specific scale. The aim of this communication is to analyze the content validity, in line with international recommendations that reveal the importance of the representativeness of the indicators. This is the first phase of an ongoing validation process and involves a dual approach (descriptive and empirical). A literature review and detailed analysis of existing instruments (generic and specific for other disabled populations) enabled the identification of representative indicators for the group. In addition, two rounds of conversations were held with 21 people with XLH from Latin America to gather their perceptions. Contextual and language factors, specific needs and interests/desires were taken into account when designing the instrument. Based on all this information, the first version of the XLHQOL questionnaire was drawn up and sent to 11 experts, selected for their professional experience and experience with the condition, to assess each item for relevance, clarity, simplicity and ambiguity. The content validity indices (CVI) were calculated: all the items were relevant (CVI-I >0.82), considered clear (CVI-I >0.82), simple (CVI-I >0.73) and unambiguous (CVI-I >0.55), corroborated by the CVI of universal agreement (CVI-AU 0.36-0.73) and medium (CVI-M 0.92-0.98). Of the 168 initial items, only 13 needed to be reformulated in terms of their simplicity and ambiguity (CVI <0.75), based on the experts' qualitative observations. The analysis of agreement between the experts indicated high consistency in the evaluations of the instrument's items. Gross agreement was ≥80% for most pairs, and the Gwet AC1 index values were high for all the criteria assessed: relevance (0.94), clarity (0.83), simplicity (0.87) and ambiguity (0.81). These results indicate significant substantial agreement and high consensus among the experts. Confirming content validity is a critical step in the development of questionnaires, ensuring that it performs well in what it sets out to assess. This research is fundamental for the restructuring of support organizations and for better quality lives, particularly relevant in the lives of people with XLH, who demand more visibility in care and protagonism of their citizenship.

Keywords: validation, hypophosphatemia, content validity, indicators; representativeness

Socio-academic Participation in IDD: Pathways to Inclusion

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Luísa Gomes
Affiliation institution: Instituto de Educação, Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: luisa.gomes1@edu.ulisboa.pt
Co-author(s) name(s): Sofia Santos

Introduction: The construct of participation has seen growing interest in school policy, aiming to be reflected in practice. Although participation is both a right and a predictor of inclusion, students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) face daily challenges and barriers that impact their learning and academic inclusion. The scarcity of evidence in this area underscores the relevance of our objective: to identify challenges/barriers and facilitators to the socio-academic participation of students with IDD in mainstream schools, as perceived by teachers and students with IDD, and to reflect on intervention strategies/measures to implement for these students' participation. To this end, the principal researcher facilitated group meetings with

teachers (n=9) and students with and without IDD (n=8), following the nominal group technique. Data were subjected to content analysis, including coding and categorization. Results: Students identified as challenges: being motivated to participate and involved; having the courage and confidence to participate; and being able to help others. Teachers mentioned the capacity to respond to students' cognitive limitations; successfully include everyone in activities; differentiating pedagogically; and diversify strategies to meet all needs. Students cited barriers such as fear of making mistakes and being judged by their peers/teachers; lack of motivation; difficulty understanding tasks and expressing their thoughts; and their relationship with teachers. Teachers highlighted emotional/affective issues; inadequate physical resources; students' cognitive difficulties; communication’ weaknesses; and scarcity of human resources for targeted support. As facilitators, students noted teacher support and understanding; self-confidence, self-concept, and self-esteem; positive feedback/reinforcement from peers and teachers; and collaboration and mutual help in daily school life. Teachers pointed to empathy and the quality of relationships; effective pedagogical practices and educational supports; the adequation of physical resources; and appropriate assessment strategies. Intervention strategies/measures identified by students include designing inclusive activities suitable, using diverse teaching methodologies, promoting peer support, and ensuring a safe, judgment-free environment. Teachers emphasizes community involvement, curriculum and accessibility adjustments, and appropriate training for educational professionals. Based on the voices of the students and teachers, this study contributes by: stimulating scientific debate on participation (vs. mere presence) and reaffirming the construct as a right; critically reflecting on intervention strategies, informing more inclusive policies and practices; mapping interventions towards equitable, accessible, and person-centered environments; reinforcing the role of teachers and students as active educational agents; proposing an instrument to assesses the socio-academic participation of students with IDD, thereby monitoring pedagogical practice; and involving the educational community in promoting well-being and quality of life of all students.

Keywords: Challenges, Barriers, and Facilitators; Participation; Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; Intervention Strategies; Inclusive Education

Intergenerational change in social inclusion of adults with intellectual disability aged 40-49

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Kálya Yasmine Lima
Affiliation institution: Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland
Country: Ireland
Author e-mail: limaky@tcd.ie
Co-author(s) name(s): Darren Mc Causland; Philip McCallion; Mary McCarron

Introduction: Research consistently shows that individuals with intellectual disabilities face major barriers to social participation, mainly due to reliance on assistance and health or physical limitations. Aim: This study examines differences in social inclusion between two generations of adults with intellectual disability in their 40s, measured twelve years apart. Method: Data was drawn from Waves 1 and 5 of the Intellectual Disability Supplement to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (IDS-TILDA), through a Pre-Interview Questionnaire and a Computer-Assisted Personal Interview. Wave 1 included 288 participants aged 40–49, while Wave 5 involved 183 individuals in the same age group. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each measure, and CHAID (Chi-Squared Automatic Interaction Detection) decision tree analysis was applied. Results: Weekly family contact was more common in Wave 5 (76.0%, n=130) than Wave 1 (53.7%, n=154). Decision tree analysis found no significant wave differences; however, residential circumstances were a key predictor (p=0.000), with higher contact among those living independently/with family (86.0%, n=117). Weekly contact with friends increased significantly, from 47.3% (n=124) to 96.6% (n=141) (p=0.000). Reports of receiving help from friends/neighbors rose from 16.0% to 30.5%. Participants living independently/with family were more likely to receive help (35.9%, n=51; p=0.000). A significant increase was also observed in community group homes (12.2%, n=12 to 29.8%, n=25; p=0.003). Help given rose from 17.0% to 33.0%. Employed participants were more likely to help (43.3%, n=55) than unemployed (15.7%, n=53; p=0.000), though a notable increase was seen among unemployed individuals (10.1%, n=21 to 24.4%, n=32; p=0.000). Regular community activities increased between Wave 1 (mean=6.43, Std Dev=2.83) and Wave 5 (mean=7.21, Std Dev = 2.33). However, this increase was not significant in the decision tree analysis. Participants living in community group homes or independently/with family (69.6%, n=328) engaged more (mean=7.22, Std Dev=2.43) than those in residential care (30.4%, n=143; mean = 5.6, Std Dev= 2.85) (p=0.000). Self-choice scores were higher in Wave 5 (mean=6.14, Std Dev=4.03) than Wave 1 (mean=4.01, Std Dev =3.58). This difference was not significant in the decision tree analysis, which identified participants with moderate intellectual disability living independently or in community group homes were more likely to have higher scores (41.4%, n=67; p=0.013). A similar pattern was observed for individuals with mild intellectual disability living independently/with family (88.9%, n=56; p=0.004). Internet use rose sharply from 10.8% (n=31) to 79.1% (n=129), with wave as the strongest predictor (p=0.000). Mobile phone ownership increased from 24.7% (n=71) to 65.6% (n=120). Among those living independently/with family, ownership rose from 52.5% (n=32) to 80.0% (n=68) (p=0.000). In community group homes, ownership was highest among individuals with mild intellectual disability (68.5%, n=50), with increases among other levels from 15.3% (n=9) to 42.0% (n=21) (p=0.002). Conclusion: Findings show improvements in social inclusion among adults with intellectual disabilities over 12 years. Increases in social contact, community participation, autonomy, and digital access suggest positive shifts in opportunities for connection and independence. These trends likely reflect the growing impact of deinstitutionalisation, and the expansion of community-based living supports.

Keywords: intellectual disability, social inclusion, community participation

Quality of life, rights and inclusion: the role of self-determination

Oral Communication

Abstract

Authors names: Clarissa Moreira1, Cristina Simões2, André Oliveira3, Karrie Shogren4, Mayumi Hagiwara5, Armanda Pereira6, Pedro Rosário7, Fernando Gomes8 & Sofia Santos9
Affiliation institution: 1Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa; 2Centro de Estudos em Educação e Inovação (Ci&DEI), Instituto Politécnico de Viseu; 3Centro de Investigação em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho; Departamento de Psicologia e Educação, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade da Beira Interior; 4Beach Center on Disability and Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities, University of Kansas; 5Department of Special Education, Graduate College of Education, San Francisco State University; 6 Departamento de Educação e Psicologia, Escola de Ciências Humanas e Sociais, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro; Centro de Investigação em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho; 7Centro de Investigação em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho; 8 SpertLab; Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa; 9 UIDEF – Instituto da Educação, Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboal
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: clarissa-fisio@hotmail.com;

Within the framework of strengths-based approach, and following the most recent conceptual model in the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), self-determination (SD) and quality of life (QOL) are increasingly recognized as two main interrelated and critical constructs. Both are central to promoting the rights, inclusion, and well-being for persons with IDD. While QOL has been extensively studied and adopted as a comprehensive framework for services and supports provision and outcome based-evaluation, SD, despite its strong association with achieving personal outcomes – has received comparatively less attention. Nonetheless, existing evidence consistently shows that people with higher levels of self-determination tend to experience better outcomes and improved QOL. In Portugal further research is necessary, as national studies have not kept pace with recent international advancement in the field. According to the latest Causal Agency Theory, every person has the capacity to initiate and cause actions through volitional and agentic actions/behaviors. The significance of SD as a fundamental right, and as an educational and rehabilitative outcome, is gaining recognition in our country. However, traditional support models and socio-cultural constraints continue to pose barriers to the development and training of SD skills. Grounded on the assumption that enhanced SD abilities contribute to improved QOL, the present study aims to explore the relationship between these constructs, with a specific focus on identifying predictors of SD predictors. To examine the interaction between SD and QOL in real-life contexts, the Portuguese versions of the Self-Determination Inventory and the Personal Outcomes Scale were administered. The sample comprised 80 participants aged 13 to 60 years (27±13.8), 40 males and 40 females, with mild (n=54) and moderate (n=26) levels of IDD. Findings revealed significant and positive correlations (r=.37) between the components-constructs and the essential characteristics of self-determination and several domains of QOL, indicating that persons with higher QOL tend to exhibit more self-determination skills. Linear regression analyses confirmed that QOL significantly predicted SD (β=.37, p<.001), underscoring the predictive power of QOL and the importance of contextual factors and support adjustment in fostering agentic behavior. This research contributes both conceptually and practically. It reinforces the relationship between SD and QOL and offers practical implications for services and policy. To effectively support persons with IDD, services must be tailored to their needs, not only to enhance their QOL, but also to empower self-determination. This requires an investment in personal development, talent cultivation and the creation of opportunities for agency. A multidimensional assessment approach is essential, guiding person-environment fit strategies and informing both supports systems and policy decisions. Ultimately, SD should be regarded as a central outcome in individualized support plans promoting autonomy, dignity and inclusion for persons with IDD.

Keywords: self-determination, quality of life, correlation, intellectual and developmental disability; personal outcomes

Promoting self-determination at home: the moderating role of intellectual disability

Oral Communication

Abstract

Authors: Cristina Mumbardó-Adam, Silvia Martínez-Perramon, Neus Solé-Ferrer & Clara

Andrés-Gárriz
Affiliation institution: Universitat de Barcelona
Country: Spain

Author e-mail:cmumbardo@ub.edu

Research in the field of disability has outlined self-determination as a key construct because of its impact on their quality of life and the achievement of desired related outcomes. Self-determination development must be promoted by providing tailored opportunities to practice those skills within home contexts, as families are primary facilitators of self-determined actions. This study aims to ascertain if opportunities at home to engage in self-determined actions are propelling self-determination development and if the presence of intellectual disability is moderating this relationship. A total sample of 620 youth with (59.8%) and without intellectual disability (40.2%) participated in this study. Within the participants with intellectual disability, 19.2% had mild support needs, 24% had moderate support needs, and 11.9% had severe support needs. The online Spanish version of the AIR self-determination scale was used to evaluate both self-determination capacities and opportunities to engage in self-determined actions. A moderation effect model was computed to understand the relationship between opportunities to engage in self-determined actions at home, self-determination total scores and the level of intellectual disability. Results have confirmed direct effects of opportunities at home on self-determination scores, thus highlighting those opportunities to act in a self-determined manner are, in fact, propelling better levels of self-determination. Also, the level of intellectual disability was moderating this relationship between opportunities at home and self-determination scores, that is, the presence of intellectual disability decreased the opportunities participants perceived, at home, to engage in self-determined actions. These results highlight the importance of building and promoting opportunities at home, especially for people with intellectual disability, as those contextualized and tailorized opportunities are crucial for them to become more self-determined.

Keywords: intellectual disability, social inclusion, community participation

The Humanistic Perspective as a Guiding Lighthouse: Reframing and Applying QOL in the Field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Ran Neuman
Affiliation institution: Zefat Academic College
Country: Israel
Author e-mail: rann.academy@gmail.com

This presentation outlines the Holistic Model of Support (HMS) (Neuman, 2024), grounded in humanistic perspective that promotes the Quality of Life (QOL) of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Drawing on recent theoretical developments and participatory research, a three-layered conceptual framework is proposed philosophical, theoretical, and practical—that repositions autonomy, personal meaning, and holistic perception as core drivers of QOL in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The philosophical layer articulates humanism as a value base; the theoretical layer translates it into guiding principles; and the practical layer offers concrete methods, including structured dialogue, continuous learning, and values-based assessment. Findings from an action research project involving Direct Support Providers (DSP) illustrated how training based on HSM contributed to enhanced role clarity, ethical awareness, and practices aligned with humanistic values. Recent findings indicate that implementing the Holistic Support Model (HSM) led to a shift in how DSPs perceive their roles — from a task-oriented focus on normative functioning to meaningful engagement with the emotional experiences, personal choices, and aspirations of the individuals they support. Dialogue emerged as a central tool, enabling a more reciprocal relationship and supporting the development of autonomy and personal meaning. The findings underscore the potential of the HSM to promote person-centered practices in order to promote QOL.

Keywords: Quality of Life and Resource management to support adulthood

Promoting Self-Determination in Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Evidence-Based Implications for Practice, Research, and Policy

Oral Communication

Abstract

Authors: André Oliveira1, Clarissa Moreira2, Sofia Santos3, Maria Carneiro4, Ana Guimarães4, Sara Teixeira4, Sofia Vidal4, Armanda Pereira5
Affiliations: 1 Departamento de Psicologia e Educação, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade da Beira Interior; Centro de Investigação em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho; 2Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa, 3 Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Universidade de Lisboa. Unidade de Investigação e Desenvolvimento em Educação e Formação, Instituto da Educação,

Universidade de Lisboa; 4 Centro de Investigação em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho;5Departamento de Educação e Psicologia, Escola de Ciências Humanas e Sociais, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro; Centro de Investigação em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho

Country: Portugal

Author e-mail: andre.soares.oliveira@ubi.pt

Promoting self-determination (SD) and community integration (CI) of people with developmental disabilities (DD) is a central concern in disability research and practice. The current presentation integrates findings from two empirical studies to explore the influence of personal and environmental variables on SD and CI among Portuguese adults with DD, offering practical implications for inclusive policy and intervention. Study 1 (N = 308) investigated the direct and indirect effects of SD on CI through educational attainment, and the influence of being supported in decision-making on the former relationship. Results showed that SD had both direct and indirect positive effects on CI. Conversely, being supported in decision-making demonstrated negative direct and indirect effects on both SD and CI, suggesting that while support can be essential, poorly aligned or overbearing support may hinder autonomy and inclusion.

Study 2 (N = 116) focused on adults with cerebral palsy (CP), examining the impact of the number of additional impairments, types of support, and occupational status on three core SD characteristics: action-control beliefs, volitional action, and agentic actions. Results revealed that additional impairments had no significant impact on SD. However, the number of support types negatively predicted volitional action, while occupational status showed strong positive effects across all three SD dimensions. These findings suggest that environmental factors—particularly engagement in educational or work contexts—play a more decisive role in fostering SD than fixed personal conditions.

Together, these studies underscore the transformative potential of SD in improving life outcomes for individuals with DD, reinforcing its influence on educational achievements, community participation, and overall autonomy. The findings highlight the importance of enriching environmental conditions to promote SD, such as through employment, education, and targeted support strategies. Implications align with strategic priorities of the Portuguese National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities (2021–2025), particularly in promoting access to education (Axis 3), employment and vocational training (Axis 4), and equitable participation (Axis 1). Interventions should focus on (1) fostering educational and occupational opportunities for adults with DD, (2) implementing training programs for decision-making supporters aligned with SD-promoting approaches, and (3) coordinating the various types of support used by individuals to ensure they work synergistically toward personal goals. This integrated analysis advances our understanding of how dispositional characteristics like SD interact with contextual factors, offering guidance for inclusive policy-making and individualized intervention design.

Keywords: Self-determination, community integration, personal and environmental factors, developmental disabilities, cerebral palsy

The Italian Adaptation of the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI)

Oral Communication

Abstract

Authors: Sara Santilli, Isabella Valbusa, Denise Zucchini
Affiliations: University of Padova
Country: Italy
Author e-mail: sara.santilli@unipd.it

Self-determination has received growing international attention, as it is closely linked to positive life outcomes such as employment, community participation, and overall quality of life. A robust body of research has emphasized the importance of assessing and fostering self-determination, particularly among adults with intellectual disabilities. Supporting self-determination for individuals with and without disabilities in inclusive contexts is increasingly recognized as a priority. In this regard, the availability of psychometrically sound assessment tools is essential to monitor self-determination, identify areas for support, and guide effective interventions. Based on Causal Agency Theory, the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI) was developed to assess self-determination in young people with disabilities. Although the SDI has been adapted and validated in several countries—including the United States, Spain, France, and China—no validated adaptation exists for the Italian context. This study addresses that gap by presenting the translation and cultural adaptation of the SDI for use in Italy. The instrument was translated into Italian and administered to 145 adults with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities (M = 31.33, SD = 11.07; 60.7% men). The factorial structure was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), while convergent and discriminant validity were examined. Convergent validity was assessed through correlations with an existing Italian measure of self-determination. Test-retest reliability was also evaluated. Discriminant validity was verified through the administration of the Courage Scale and the Hope Scale. The results supported a six-factor model corresponding to the subscales of self-initiative, self-direction, pathways thinking, psychological empowerment, self-realization, and control expectancies. Significant and positive correlations with courage and hope confirmed discriminant validity, while correlations with the Italian self-determination scale supported convergent validity. Test-retest reliability further confirmed the stability of the instrument over time. These findings demonstrate the robust psychometric properties of the Italian adaptation of the SDI and highlight its potential for both research and practical applications in supporting self-

determination among individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: self-determination, intellectual disability, quality of life, psychometrics, instrument adaptation

Meaning, existential or spiritual well-being : a ninth domain of quality of life for people with intellectual disability?

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Drs Schepens Hadewych, R.M.M.
Affiliation institution: KU Leuven, Parenting and Special Education Research Unit
Country: Belgium
Author e-mail: hadewych.schepens@kuleuven.be
Co-author(s) name(s): Prof Dr Bea Maes

1. Objective(s):

The dominant framework for assessing quality of life (QoL) in individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) in the Western world is the model by R. Schalock et al., which identifies eight core domains. This study explores whether aspects such as meaning-making, spiritual/religious experience, and existential well-being (WB) warrant recognition as a ninth domain.

2. Theoretical framework

Our research focuses on the QoL of elderly individuals with ID. Older adults are known to reflect on life's meaning, mortality, and spiritual experiences. The concept of 'spiritual being' has been previously proposed for all people with ID (Brown & Renwick; Liégeois, 2014), and pastoral care has been explored (Veltens et al., 2016). Non-ID-specific QoL models include similar constructs, such as 'Sense of Significance' in Nolan's Senses Framework (Ryan et al., 2008) and 'Love' in Kitwood's model (1997). The World Health Organisation incorporates Spirituality/Religion/Personal Beliefs in its QoL instruments, including the WHOQOL-SRPB.

Themes of existential and spiritual well-being are also addressed in psychology, theology, ethics, and anthropology (Della Fave, 2009; George & Park, 2016; Martela & Steger, 2016). A potential 'Existential Well-being' domain appears to intersect with Schalock's domains of Emotional Well-being, Interpersonal Relationships, Personal Development, Self-Determination, and Physical Well-being. While Schalock (2004) acknowledges interrelations among domains, these may not fully capture the existential concerns of elderly individuals with ID. Dezutter (2016) distinguishes between happiness and meaningfulness, reinforcing the need for a distinct domain.

3. Research methodology

We conducted qualitative analyses of focus groups and systematic literature to identify QoL indicators for elderly individuals with ID. While most items aligned with Schalock's eight domains, several did not. These outliers clustered around themes of meaning (life, past, future), spirituality, and existential reflection. These were framed from a psychological—not theological—perspective. We incorporated these insights into the QoL-Elderly Persons with ID (QoL-EPID) questionnaire, which includes a potential ninth domain on Meaning.

4. The results (preliminary or final)

Focus group participants emphasized the importance of living a meaningful life. Literature supports the relevance of life review, discussions on death, future orientation, rituals, prayer, and belief. However, crafting accessible, comprehensible questions proved challenging. Ten questions were developed and iteratively refined with expert input. Participants with mild ID responded positively, finding the questions understandable and meaningful.

5. A clear demonstration of the contribution of communication to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

The QoL-EPID, along with the Frailty-EPID and QoS-EPID (which address Meaning within psychological frailty), will be deployed in a large-scale survey in Flanders (Sep 2025–Dec 2026).

We aim to answer:

- What are valid indicators of 'Existential Well-being' for elderly individuals with ID?
- Do QoL-EPID items effectively capture these experiences?
- Should these indicators form a ninth domain, or be integrated into existing ones?

We will assess internal consistency and distinctiveness of this domain, and explore its relevance across ID levels, including severe/profound ID. We will also identify effective interventions to support existential well-being.

Robust, well-communicated data on meaning-making in the lives of people with ID can inform care practices and inspire new tools to enhance their QoL.

Keywords: quality of life, QoL-model, meaning, spiritual well-being, existential well-being, religion, elderly, intellectual disability

Translating Self-Determination Inventory (SDI): Cross-Cultural Challenges and Recommendations from International Efforts

Authors: Karrie A. Shogren1, Mayumi Hagiwara2, Abdulaziz H. Alsaeed1, Yves Lachapelle3, Vassilis Argyropoulos4, Anna Theodori4, Sara Santilli5, Yunfeng Wang6, Clarissa Moreira7,

Sofia Santos7, André Oliveira8, Armanda Pereira8, Pedro Rosário8, Clara Andrés-Gárriz9, and Cristina Mumbardó-Adam9,
Affiliations: 1Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities; 2San Francisco State University; 3Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières ; 4University of Thessaly; 5University of Padova; 6East China Normal University; 7Universidade de Lisboa; 8Universidade do Minho; 9Universitat de Barcelona

Oral Communication

Abstract

Self-determination has received attention throughout the world, and multiple countries and cultures have embraced the construct and its importance to the lives of people with disabilities over the past two decades. However, there have been challenges around how self-determination theories and concepts can be translated into other cultural contexts. The goal of this presentation is to provide information to guide ongoing cross-cultural research to advance self-determination research, policy, and practice across the globe, as well as inform the work of international teams who seek to engage in cross-cultural theory and assessment development and translation, advancing self-determination outcomes. To gather information on self-determination translation work across the globe, a survey was created for teams that are translating the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI) development team. The survey asked about the theory underlying the assessment and translating key terminology including Causal Agency Theory, causal agent, self-determination, and self-determined actions as well as the specific self-determined actions, abilities, and attitudes. For each term and definition, the survey asked about: 1) the ease of translation, 2) familiarity of the translation team and the general public in the cultural context, and 3) the contextual fit of the terms and definitions. The survey also included an open-ended space for translation teams to describe their rationales or comments related to their ratings on these dimensions. Eight international translation teams participated, including Arabic, French, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese. Each translation team completed the survey collaboratively. We found universal and context-specific issues that impact translation and variation in the familiarity and contextual fit of self-determination and Casual Agency Theory constructs across cultures. We also found that abilities and attitudes associated with each self-determined action were reported to cause more challenges and mixed reactions in translation than the root terms of volitional action, agentic action, and action-control beliefs. Findings suggest the importance of advancing a balanced approach to translation that considers linguistic and cultural factors as well as ways self-determination theories and associated constructs can be interpreted and meaningfully contextualized across cultures when translation complex concepts and terms associated with self-determination and Causal Agency Theory. Finally, all international translation teams felt the need to highlight aspects of cross-cultural validity through the translation process, enriching the multi-dimensional constructs of self-determination and Causal Agency Theory. Implications will be also proposed and discussed by all translation

teams.

Keywords: self-determination, intervention, translation, cross-cultural validity

Assessing Students' Quality of life: What the curriculum still has to learn

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Cristina Simões
Affiliation institution: Centro de Estudos em Educação e Inovação (Ci&DEI), Instituto Politécnico de Viseu
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: cristinasimoes7@sapo.pt
Co-author(s) name(s): Beatriz Simões

The main objective of this study was to explore perceptions of quality of life (QoL) among students, especially those who face greater difficulties in accessing the curriculum, from the perspective of the students themselves and their carers. The aim was to understand which dimensions of QoL are less developed and how curriculum benchmarks can be transformed to better respond to the needs of these students, reflecting on what still needs to be incorporated throughout their school career.

There is evidence of a close relationship between the eight domains of QoL as proposed by Schalock and colleagues (e.g., Schalock & Alonzo, 2002), organised into three central factors — independence, social participation and well-being (Simões et al., 2024) — and the ten areas of PASEO, which integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes that are fundamental to students' development throughout compulsory schooling (Martins et al., 2017). Although these benchmarks establish a solid foundation for promoting QOL in the school context, recent evidence indicates that the current curriculum and educational practices do not always comprehensively cover all domains of life (Simões & Santos, 2016). The dimensions relating to the rights, self-determination and social inclusion of students who have Significant Curriculum Adaptations implemented in their Individual Education Programmes remain underdeveloped (Simões, 2020).

To this end, the study used a sample of 1,674 students, of whom 875 had increased difficulties in accessing the curriculum, accompanied by 1,334 carers, including family members and education professionals. Data collection was based on the application of the Personal Outcomes Scale (POS) for Children and Young People (Simões et al., 2024), which assesses Schalock's eight domains of QoL, namely: personal development, self-

determination, interpersonal relationships, social inclusion, rights, emotional well-being, physical well-being, and material well-being.

The results revealed that, from the students' perspective, the QoL domains of social inclusion (M=14.16, SD=2.52) and self-determination (M=14.52, SD=2.26) had the lowest ratings. In contrast, interpersonal relationships (M=16.01, SD=1.74) had the highest QOL ratings. Carers tended to give lower QOL ratings than students, except in the domains of rights, emotional well-being and physical well-being. These data highlight critical areas where educational practices need to improve in order to promote the overall QoL of these students, highlighting significant gaps that the curriculum should mitigate in order to effectively prepare students for post-school life and full citizenship.

Furthermore, the results obtained have important implications for (a) the assessment and monitoring of the personal outcomes desired by students; (b) the use of QoL domains as tools to guide personalised support and inclusive practices; (c) the development of educational strategies that encourage greater independence, social participation and recognition of students' rights; and (d) the implementation of evidence-based practices for monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. In short, if the curriculum addresses what students should learn, it must also learn from the students' own outcomes, highlighting the urgency of rethinking multidimensional educational approaches, which are slow to move beyond theory and become an integral part of all students' lives.

References:

Martins, G., Gomes, C., Brocardo, J., Pedroso, V., Carrilho, J., Silva, L., Encarnação, M., Horta, M., Calçada, T., Nery, R., E Rodrigues, S. (2017). Perfil dos alunos à saída da escolaridade obrigatória. Ministério da Educação.
Simões, C. (2020). O contributo do modelo da qualidade de vida para a educação inclusiva. In C. Freire, C. Mangas, & J. Sousa (Orgs.), Livro de Resumos da VI Conferência Internacional para a Inclusão (pp. 91-102). Politécnico de Leiria.
Simões, C., Simões, B., Claes, C., Remco, M., van Loon, J., & Schalock, R. (2024). Avaliar a qualidade de vida: Manual de administração da Escala Pessoal de Resultados-Crianças e Jovens. CIEDEI, Instituto Politécnico de Viseu.
Simões, C., & Santos, S. (2016). Comparing the quality of life of adults with and without intellectual disability. Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 60(4), 378–388. doi:10.1111/jir.12256
Schalock, R. L., & Alonso, M. A. V. (2002). Handbook on quality of life for human service practitioners. American Association on Mental Retardation.

Keywords: Quality of Life; Rights; Curriculum; Inclusive Education; Assessment

Model for Supporting Independent Living in Portugal – Autonomy and Participation of People with Disabilities, the Human Rights Paradigm: Evidence from Pilot Projects

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: Fernanda Sousa (coord.)
Affiliation institution: Instituto Nacional para a Reabilitação, IP
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: Fernanda.b.Sousa@inr.mtsss.pt
Co-author(s) name(s): Helena Alexandre; Joana Rodrigues; Maria Betânia Mendonça; Teresa Varanda.

This presentation shares the principal findings from the pilot projects of the Independent Living Support Model (MAVI). These projects were established by Decree-Law No. 129/2017 in Portugal, reflecting the perspective of the Relational Model of disability, as described in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). This perspective is considered to be highly relevant to promoting independent living and inclusion for persons with disabilities.

The Relational Model is based on the understanding that disability results from the interaction between people's functional characteristics and social, cultural and environmental barriers, requiring structural change in public policies to ensure equal opportunities, autonomy and social participation (UN, 2006). The Convention also clearly lists a set of human rights of persons with disabilities, considering them as universal and inalienable.

MAVI enables people with disabilities to exercise their self-determination by providing personal assistance tailored to their needs and in accordance with their wishes and decisions. This support is provided by Independent Living Support Centres (CAVI), and addresses the needs of people with sensory, motor, intellectual and neurodiverse disabilities. It thus constitutes a paradigm shift, replacing the welfare-based approach with one centred on the individual, their circumstances, wishes and rights – the human rights paradigm.

Data collected during the pilot project implementation period (2018–2023, extended to 2024 and currently in force) includes: i) quantitative survey of CAVI monthly reports; ii) functional analysis of beneficiaries and the type of activities requested; and iii) qualitative assessment of the impacts on autonomy, self-esteem and social participation.

The pilot projects include 35 CAVIs across the country, which in 2019 provided support to 905 people. However, in 2024, the number of people supported monthly exceeded 1,000, reaching 1,148 in March 2025, with support provided by up to 938 personal assistants. The most common limitations of the people supported relate to motor and visual impairments,

with the most requested activities being support with travel, cultural participation, and occasional domestic support.

The data highlights the transformative impact of personal assistance on the lives of those supported: increased individual control over their lives, self-determination, identity enhancement, greater community inclusion and reduced institutionalisation.

In line with the human rights paradigm, MAVI contributes very robustly to the exercise of the right to independent living and active participation in society. It is therefore an important inclusion policy measure, in various dimensions, contexts and ages, which needs to be deepened and broadened.

The testimony of a person with a disability, supported by personal assistance, is also included. This individual share their experience in the first person, highlighting the concrete impact of the model on daily life. The direct participation of persons with disabilities in public forums on policies that concern them is not only consistent with the Convention (UN, 2006), but also essential to ensuring a truly inclusive approach.

References:
United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. New York: UN.

Keywords: Independent living; autonomy; participation; inclusion of persons with disabilities; human rights

Cooperative Learning in the classroom: a path to self-regulation and social interaction.

Oral Communication

Abstract

Author name: María del Carmen Torres Carrero
Affiliation institution: Facultad de Educación de Ciudad Real. Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha
Country: Spain
Author e-mail: mcarmen.torres2@alu.uclm.es
Co-author(s) name(s): Óscar Navarro Martínez, Juana María Anguita Acero

The purpose of this study is to analyze the application of Cooperative Learning in the first cycle of Primary Education, seeking to promote an inclusive, enriching, and personalized educational model that fosters self-regulation and social skills in students. This research is framed within the context of active methodologies, which have proven to be effective tools for transforming traditional education and promoting more meaningful learning.

The sample consists of 148 students from two double-track schools located in Miguelturra, Ciudad Real. One of them corresponds to the experimental group, and the other to the control group. The experimental group includes students with significant curricular adaptations due to academic gaps, which allowed for observation of their participation in the general classroom dynamics. However, the study did not focus on analyzing the individual progress of these students, but rather on evaluating the impact of cooperative learning on the group as a whole in order to promote an inclusive environment.

The methodological design consists of three distinct phases. In the first phase, initial data collection is carried out using various validated tools: the standardized Neuropsychological Test for the Assessment of Executive Functions in Children (ENFEN), which measures overall maturational development (Portellano Pérez et al., 2009); the Learning Styles Questionnaire for Primary School, specifically adapted to the needs of students (Valdivia, 2015); and the "Self-Assessment, Movement, and Color Workbook for Getting to Know Yourself Better" (Ponce Blázquez, 2024), designed to assess students' perception of themselves through a process of self-reflection.

During the second phase, the Cooperative Learning methodology is implemented in the experimental group. To this end, initial training is provided to the teachers involved in order to ensure the correct application of cooperative strategies in the classroom, tailored to the characteristics and needs of the students.

The final phase collects data again in both centers, allowing for a comparative analysis between the control and experimental groups, as well as an intra-group analysis comparing pretest and posttest measurements.

The results reveal that the Cooperative Learning-based intervention promotes students' awareness of how they express themselves and their perception of their communicative and social needs. Although the progress of students with educational needs was not specifically measured, these students were observed to participate actively and fully within the group. In addition, the group improved in self-control, as reflected in a decrease in physical perception and an increase in mental perception. These findings suggest that the methodology promotes greater awareness of group interaction and reflection on how to relate to others.

The research emphasizes the importance of incorporating strategies that integrate social interaction and self-reflection for a more inclusive and effective education. Cooperative learning not only improves academic performance, but also contributes to the development of an inclusive environment that promotes communication, interaction, and the comprehensive development of students.

Keywords: Cooperative learning; Primary education; Self-regulation; Social skills.

Development of a quality of life index to improve the inclusion of students with IDD in general education in Spain: A pilot study

Poster

Abstract

Author name: Antonio M. Amor
Affiliation institution: Department of Personality, Assessment, and Psychological Treatments. Institute for Community Inclusion. University of Salamanca
Country: Spain
Author e-mail: aamor@usal.es
Co-author(s) name(s): Zofia Wolowiec; Victoria Sánchez-Gómez; María Fernández; Alba Aza; Verónica M. Guillén

Background. Although Spain recognizes inclusive education as a right, students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are still at a special risk of educational exclusion. Given this, different scholars claim the need to adopt the Schalock and Verdugo's quality of life (QoL) model to help Spanish schools in their task to include these students. The QoL model assumes a whole child approach, thus enabling schools to consider the aspirations and needs of their students with IDD from a multidimensional perspective as a starting point to implement supports to enhance their inclusion. Applying this model in practice requires a correct measurement of QoL in relevant groups and contexts, and there is a lack of QoL assessment instruments developed for students with IDD enrolled in general education schools in Spain. To address this need, the Quality of Life Index-Primary education (QoLI-PE) is an instrument under development in Spain whose aim is to measure the QoL of primary education students with IDD enrolled in general education contexts to mobilize supports to improve their inclusion from a multidimensional perspective. Although it is a promising tool, evidence is required regarding its functioning. The goal of this poster is to show evidence concerning the reliability and validity of the scores obtained with the QoLI-PE in a pilot study conducted in Spain to test the tool. Methods. A cross-sectional study was conducted following the steps recommended in the development of standardized QoL assessment instruments. The QoLI-PE is an instrument that is implemented through a semi-structured interview following a 'report-of-others' approach. The instrument has 96 items, 12 per QoL domain (i.e., emotional wellbeing, material wellbeing, physical wellbeing, personal development, self-determination, social inclusion, interpersonal relationships, and rights). A total of 130 students with IDD enrolled in primary, general education schools in Spain (M = 9.52 years, SD = 2.36, 66.9% boys) were assessed with the QoLI-PE by 117 informants (M = 11.94 years of experience in education, SD = 9.27, 91.4% women) following 102 interviews. The analyses of the pilot study involved the evidence on the items quality, the study of validity evidence based on the internal structure of the instrument through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and the study of reliability as internal consistency using Cronbach's α, Ordinal α, and ω. Results. After achieving a balanced solution, the CFA showed preliminary evidence of the internal structure of the tool based on the theoretical model of QoL composed by eight first-order intercorrelated domains (χ^2/df = 1.266; RMSEA =.045; CFI =.985; TLI =.984). Internal consistency was excellent for all the domains, with all the indices > .75. Discussion. This work provides preliminary evidence on the correct functioning of the QoLI-PE, a new QoL assessment instrument that seeks to implement the conceptual and applied implications that a QoL framework has to foster the inclusion of students with IDD. Having a duly calibrated instrument is essential to use a QoL approach both as a starting point to define supports and as an outcome variable to measure the impact of the supports implemented.

Keywords: Quality of Life; Inclusive Education; Standardized Assessment; Validation; Pilot Study

Development and Validation of a Family Quality of Life Scale for People with Acquired Brain Injury

Poster

Abstract

Author name: Alba Aza Hernández
Affiliation institution: Universidad de Salamanca (USAL)
Country: Spain
Author e-mail: azhernandez@usal.es
Co-author(s) name(s): José Luis Castillo Laderas, María Fernández Sánchez, Miguel Ángel Verdugo Alonso y Antonio Manuel Amor González

Acquired brain injury (ABI) has a profound impact not only on the affected person, but also on the family environment, altering family dynamics, roles, and overall well-being. Despite its relevance, there are no specific instruments designed to assess family quality of life (FQoL) in this context. This study presents the development and initial validation of an FQoL scale aimed at families of people with ABI. The sample consisted of 231 family members, mostly women (71%) with a mean age of 55.8 years. The instrument was constructed and refined through a rigorous three-phase process: preliminary item analysis, dimensionality and factorial fit assessment, and reliability and latent continuous information analysis using graded response models.

Psychometric analyses indicated a solid factor structure for each of the five proposed dimensions (i.e., individual well-being, family relationships, family resources, community resources, and community relationships), with adequate local and global fits. Internal consistency was satisfactory, with omega values above .70 for all factors. The information functions showed that the scales have good discriminatory power, especially at low and

medium levels of QoL, and are particularly useful for detecting needs in the most affected families.
The results support the initial validity and reliability of the scale, proposing it as a useful tool in both research and clinical and community contexts to identify areas of intervention and support in families living with ABI.

Keywords: Family Quality of Life; Acquired Brain Injury; Scale Validation; Psychometrics; Family Relationships

Escola Alerta Competition: Promoting the Rights of Children and Young People with Disabilities through Inclusive Educational Practices

Poster

Abstract

Author name: Ana Martins
Affiliation institution: Instituto Nacional para a Reabilitação, IP
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: ana.martins@inr.mtsss.pt;
Co-author(s) name(s): Miguel Ferro

The Escola Alerta Competition is promoted annually by the National Institute for Rehabilitation, I.P. (INR, I.P.) with the aim of raising awareness of the rights of people with disabilities and promoting inclusion in everyday school life. This initiative is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which sets out the right to education with equal access opportunities and the elimination of barriers to full participation, while recognising the importance of awareness-raising (UN, 2006).
Escola Alerta is part of the human rights paradigm, promoting the construction of a truly inclusive society, in which schools and the educational community are recognised as privileged spaces for the promotion of diversity, equality and participation. This initiative has established itself as a national best practice in promoting the inclusion of children and young people with disabilities in school contexts, through the recognition of projects developed by students, teachers and other educational agents.
Currently, the competition is aimed at primary and secondary schools throughout the country and rewards projects that promote accessibility, the elimination of physical, communication and social barriers, the fight against discrimination, and active participation. The projects are evaluated by a jury composed of personalities and

professionals of recognised merit.

From the beginning of this competition in the 2003/2004 academic year to the 2024/2025 academic year, 1,473 projects were submitted from 1,188 schools, involving approximately 30,800 students and more than 4,000 teachers and technicians. These projects addressed topics such as universal design in learning, the use of assistive technologies, the adaptation of school spaces, access to culture and sport, as well as awareness-raising and empathy-building activities among peers. They stand out for promoting not only physical inclusion, but also relational and symbolic inclusion — which is essential for all children and young people to feel part of the school community.

This large number of applications reflects a growing commitment of Portuguese schools to building a culture of inclusion and the transformative role of education in the lives of people with disabilities. The accumulated experience demonstrates positive impacts such as the enhancement of individual skills, the strengthening of self-esteem and self-determination, and the development of cooperative and inclusive attitudes.

Escola Alerta thus represents an educational practice consistent with the principles of the United Nations' Convention, promoting equitable, inclusive and quality education. By mobilising the entire educational community, it contributes in a concrete way to a more just, empathetic, and inclusive society.

Reference: United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. New York: UN.

Keywords: inclusive educational practices, participation, inclusion of children and young people with disabilities

Inclusion Desk: A National Network of Specialised Services for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Poster

Abstract

Author name: Eduarda Saraiva
Affiliation institution: Instituto Nacional para a Reabilitação, IP
Country: Portugal
Author e-mail: eduarda.saraiva@inr.mtsss.pt
Co-author(s) name(s): Gisela Afonso; Helena Alexandre; Helena Silva; João Pedro Santos

The Inclusion Desk Network in Portugal is a specialised service that aims to inform, guide and support people with disabilities in accessing their rights, benefits and measures, and

available supports and services.

The Inclusion Desk was created in 2016 as part of the SIMPLEX+ programme with the aim of promoting access for people with disabilities and/or incapacities, their families, professionals and all interested parties to clear information, technical support and qualified referrals. The objectives of the Inclusion Desk are in line with the principles of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006), specifically in its commitment to eliminate informational and physical barriers that hinder the effective social participation of persons with disabilities.

As a registered trademark of the National Institute for Rehabilitation, I.P. (INR, I.P.) and the Social Security Institute, I.P. (ISS), the Inclusion Desk began at the INR and in the 18 District Social Security Centres on the mainland, and was later extended to the entire national territory through agreements with local authorities. The network currently has 162 Inclusion Desks in operation: 1 headquarters at the INR, 18 at the District Social Security Centres, 1 in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, 5 in the Autonomous Region of the Azores and 137 in local authorities through formal partnerships. This growth reflects the ongoing effort to territorialise public inclusion policies.

The implementation methodology was based on the creation of a proximity network, composed of technically trained individuals to provide information and support on relevant topics such as accessibility, health, education, housing, employment, parenting, independent living, social benefits, and support products.

The data collected, using a specific monitoring model, up to 30 April 2025 reveals a total of 155,630 cases.

The Inclusion Desk is an essential tool for providing information and specialised mediation, accessible to people with disabilities, their families and civil society organisations. In addition to addressing rights and benefits, it also covers national measures and services, taking into account regional specificities. By placing the individual at the centre of the information and making it available in a clear and accessible way, the Desk contributes to the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities, promoting informed decisions and actions.

References:

Law No. 38/2004, of 18 August - Basic Law on the Legal Regime for the Prevention, Empowerment, Rehabilitation and Participation of Persons with Disabilities.

United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. New York: UN.

Keywords: access to information, specialised care, rights, autonomy, participation, inclusion of persons with disabilities