

EASPD INNOVATION AWARDS 2024





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The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities ('EASPD'), a non-profit NGO in the disability sector, promotes the views of over 20,000 social services and their umbrella associations. We promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high-quality service systems.

Funded by the European Union.

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1 Foreword: EASPD Innovation Awards

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the need to move away from medicalised approaches that stigmatise and marginalise people with mental health conditions, particularly individuals with an intellectual disability. Instead, there is a growing consensus that we must adopt a human rights-based approach. We must prioritise the dignity, autonomy, and full inclusion of all people, regardless of mental health or intellectual abilities.

These principles, most clearly framed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), have guided EASPD's work.

Based on these principles, we are pleased to recognise five promising practices of human rights-based mental health and psychosocial disability services as outstanding examples of innovation and impact.

These inspiring practices demonstrate the power of community-based, person-centred approaches that truly prioritise the voices, needs and aspirations of people with mental ill-health and intellectual disabilities. They also highlight the importance of creating inclusive and supportive environments that recognise and respect the diversity of human potential.

In this regard, the winners of the EASPD Innovation Awards 2024 offer valuable insights and lessons for all of us, whether service provider practitioners and/or advocates working to improve the living conditions and ensure the enjoyment of rights of people with intellectual disabilities and mental ill-health. The winners demonstrate that it is possible to create inclusive, human rights-based services that empower people, encourage community engagement and participation, and promote social justice and equality.

When celebrating the achievements of this year's Innovation Awards winners, let's take a moment to appreciate the progress we've made and reflect on the way forward so that we achieve a world where everyone can live a fulfilling and meaningful life.

I wish to sincerely thank all those who have applied for this call to submit innovative practices. Your efforts are invaluable to our sector and the persons we aim to support. Additionally, we are indebted to the jury who gave their time and effort to carefully review all the practices submitted.

Jim Crowe
EASPD President



We achieve a world where everyone can live a fulfilling and meaningful life

2 **Guaranteeing Choice & Control: Transforming Mental Health and Psychosocial Disabilities**

Hosted within the framework of the **EASPD Annual Conference on Guaranteeing Choice & Control: Transforming Mental Health and Psychosocial Disabilities** in Bratislava, Slovakia, (May 2024), the Fourth Edition of the EASPD Innovation Awards focuses on transforming mental health and psychosocial disabilities for guaranteeing choice and control.

The EASPD Innovation Awards are an opportunity to discover innovative practices that enable the inclusion and enjoyment of the human rights of persons with disabilities. In this sense, the aim is to learn from support service providers who have developed new and innovative approaches. These awards also aim to understand the challenges and opportunities these innovative practices have encountered; their impact on persons with disabilities, as well as how these practices can be transferred to other contexts and be sustainable, available, and accessible.

In line with these objectives, the practices selected by the jury as winners of the EASPD Innovation Awards 2024 showcase several examples of how service providers have developed user-centred and human rights-based mental health and psychosocial services in line with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRDP).

3 Selection process



Overview of the Process

The annual EASPD's Innovation Awards are based on a multi-stage process:

1. Submission of applications from disability service providers.
2. Internal review by EASPD Secretariat against eligibility criteria.
3. Assessment by a panel of independent judges against the eligibility criteria, involving peer review, expertise, and voting.

For both the internal pre-assessment and the assessment carried out by the jury, EASPD has developed guidelines that provide assessors with a clear definition of each eligibility criterion, as well as an evaluation grid that enables them to score each practice alongside each criterion on a scale of 1 to 5.

Each year a jury is formed comprising of a mix of experts, including public authorities, service providers, Disabled Persons Organisations (DPO) representatives, and researchers specialised in the topic. The Jury plays a crucial role in the evaluation process by ensuring that the winning practices are selected by independent experts and stakeholders based on transparent criteria.

The 5 proposals that received the combined highest percentage of votes from the evaluators have been selected as winners and are presented in this brochure.

Eligibility criteria

These criteria reflect our focus on practices that are innovative, user-centred, sustainable, and adaptable, with the view of both rewarding such efforts, and encouraging other organisations to develop similar approaches.

The eligibility criteria can be divided into two sub-groups: recurring criteria, which are assessed every year, and specific criteria, which are linked to the theme of the conference.

The recurring criteria are as follows:

1. The practice needs:
 - » **Innovative:** it proposes something that has not been done before or has not been done in this context.
 - » **Human rights-based:** it promotes a shift from a medical to a human right-based approach to disability. The focus is on the person – supporting the moral agency and legal capacity of the person – and not on perceived 'impairments'.
 - » **Effective:** it is demonstrably impactful.

2. Impact of the practice on the **quality of services**, in the sense that the practice has a direct/indirect positive impact on the provision of high-quality services for persons with disabilities.

The specific criteria are those that are related to the theme of the conference. For this third edition, this means criteria linked to the topic of social Innovation, including:

a) Personhood (autonomy), choice and control:
 The practice recognises and supports persons with disabilities as human rights holders. Therefore, the focus of the service is on the person (and not on a perceived impairment) and the objective of the services is autonomy – voice, choice, control, and social inclusion and no longer about maintenance, care, or protection.

The practice supports persons with disabilities to choose and have control over their life and the type of support they want to use. The practice

emphasises new ways of providing support and/or new ways of ensuring that persons with disabilities receive the support they wish. This also includes how persons with disabilities are driving the development of their support, for instance through co- production and active participation in decisions affecting their support plan.

b) Community and social inclusion:
 The practice supports the realisation of the right of persons with disabilities to live independently in the community, with choices equal to others. The practice, for instance, enables the person to perform essential daily living activities like taking care of their personal hygiene, participating in education, employment, etc and to engage with the community.

The practice offers personalised support, recognising the right of individuals to control and direct their own lives and the support they wish to receive.





4 Selected Best Practices

4.1 Winner 1: IASIS NGO

'Caregiving Project'

Organisation name: IASIS NGO

Short description:

The Civil Non-Profit Company IASIS NGO was founded in 2005. Since its inception, the focus of IASIS NGO has been on the human element. The main objectives of the organisation are to provide psychosocial support, to combat the social exclusion of vulnerable groups of the population, to offer psychological and counselling services, to create equal opportunities and new perspectives for vulnerable groups of the population, to promote mental health, to provide psychiatric care in the community based on the principles of Social Psychiatry and Psychosocial Rehabilitation, and to deliver specialised psychiatric services and psychoeducational interventions to the standards of Psychiatric Reform and the World Health Organization.

Country: Greece

Region: Attica

Website: <https://www.iasismed.eu/?lang=en>

Contact details:

Thanos Loules, EU Senior Project Manager
 thanos.loules@iasismed.eu



development as nursing assistants. Upon completing the training, participants will receive support to enter the workforce either as nursing assistants in limited liability social cooperatives or take on the role of a peer supporter within the mental health unit.

The programme enhances professional readiness, instilling key skills for easy adaptation to diverse workplaces. It emphasises improving social skills, fostering collaboration and relationships, nurturing self-awareness, inner growth, and goal achievement. Emotional well-being tools are provided, and discriminative thinking is cultivated through analytical skills.

The training sessions take place three times per week, and encompass a range of essential components such as (1) fundamental nursing skill training, (2) readiness for diverse scenarios, (3) comprehension of the requirements of individuals with mental health conditions, (4) preparedness for collaboration with psychosocial services, (5) contribution to fostering a therapeutic environment, (6) cultivation of self-care and communication proficiencies, (7) instruction in offering peer-to-peer support, (8) advancement of self-awareness and peer support skills. The training sessions and evaluation are delivered face-to-face with the beneficiaries, and it lasts for 72 hours in total (18 hours per month for each one of the four modules). At the end of the training sessions, beneficiaries have the opportunity of on-the-spot implementation of the new knowledge. On the completion of the training, a certification from the IASIS certified training centre is provided.

Funding:

Self-funded by IASIS NGO.

Impact:

This practice significantly enhances services for individuals with mental health conditions by treating



Quote from organisation: *Our Vision is to create a world with no discrimination and no injustice through education and support. Our Values are solidarity, cooperation, support @ care.*

Description of practice:

The Caregiving project by IASIS NGO aims to provide pre-vocational training to beneficiaries undergoing treatment in mental health rehabilitation units. Employing a peer-to-peer methodology, the comprehensive training programme empowers individuals with mental health conditions to participate in weekly sessions, emphasising pre-vocational

them equally as both learners and peer supporters. This inclusive approach directly meets their needs, fostering a supportive environment and improving overall service quality. Emphasising skill development, self-awareness, and peer support further enhances its effectiveness.

Empowering individuals with mental health conditions through pre-vocational training, knowledge acquisition, and socialisation is paramount for their inclusion in the workforce or assuming key roles within mental health housing facilities. This approach not only upholds their human rights but also boosts their sense of competence. Vocational training instils crucial skills, fostering confidence and self-esteem. Socialisation builds a supportive community, promoting a sense of belonging. Offering employment or more leading

roles within mental health facilities not only honours their right to meaningful work but also reinforces their autonomy and dignity. This holistic approach acknowledges and values the potential of every individual, fostering a comprehensive mental health care paradigm.

Sustainability, success factors and transferability:

Sustainability hinges on viewing beneficiaries as prospective mental health co-workers, reducing institutionalisation, and fostering inclusive employability. A training curriculum is being crafted for wider adoption, with professionals documenting crucial observations to facilitate transferability. Project success is tracked through regular assessments of beneficiaries' well-being and soft skills, overseen by experienced Mental Health Unit staff.





4.2 Winner 2: Milestones Trust

‘The Move On Project’

Organisation name: Milestones Trust

Short description:

Milestones Trust is a social care charity that supports over 450 adults with learning disabilities, mental health needs, and complex behavioural needs to live to their full potential.

Milestones Trust offer a range of services across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset, helping those we work with to live more creative, more meaningful and richer lives. From supported living to residential care, and from day opportunities to short breaks, their experience, expertise and person-centred approach ensure they are ideally placed to deliver positive outcomes for the people they support.

All of their registered services are rated as Good or Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Country: United Kingdom

Region:

Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset

Website: www.milestonestrust.org.uk

Contact details:

Helen Aitchison, Senior Operational Manager
helen.aitchison@milestonestrust.org.uk



Quote from organisation: *At Milestones Trust, we strive to recognise and celebrate the unique strengths of each and every person we support and work hard to enable them to live their best lives.*

Description of practice:

The “Move on Project” is a 24-hour mental health-supported living Recovery Service that aims to provide an opportunity for individuals with enduring and complex mental health conditions to engage in a two-



year programme of community-based rehabilitation, offering a person-centred approach to recovery. With a set of shared core values and goals, we work in collaboration with not only the people we support, but also their families, advocates, and other healthcare professionals, to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The “Move on Project” is clustered with a Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered residential service within the same area, so that people we support can move between services to offer a recovery pathway through a step-down or step-up process and, importantly, promote an innovative shift from medical to a human rights-based approach to disability. They do this by focusing on the person being supporting and not on their diagnosis or disability, offering staged approaches and an outcomes-focused pathway to recovery, working with individuals to reach goals at their own pace and in their own way.

Funding:

The Move on Project is funded by local authorities and through housing benefit. The people they support contribute towards service charges to promote skills in budgeting for and maintaining a tenancy, which also encourages a sense of belonging and responsibility.

Impact:

At the heart of the service is the idea that people should have full autonomy over their lives and next steps; we work with people for whom this has not always been the case. Most of the people we support at the “Move on Project” have extensive lived experience of repetitive use of Statutory Mental Health Services, including having been detained in hospital and experiencing that complete (and traumatic) lack of autonomy and control. The service aims to empower

people to be responsible for their own wellbeing through education such as workshops, meaningful occupation, and encouraging hope for the future despite a mental health diagnosis.

Sustainability, success factors and transferability:

The model is popular with funding bodies due to the outcomes achieved and the realistic cost of a placement at the service. Since opening in 2020, our budget surgeries have proven that the service is sustainable in terms of financial stability, that supports the current workforce. Resources can be drawn on from our

organisation to ensure the service functions effectively, while any financial gains are reinvested in the service to sustain building repairs and improvements. The service continues to grow and there are no indicators that it will not be sustainable.

The service has had proven success in supporting people to access community facilities, including paid work opportunities and volunteer work in local schools and shops, as well as part of the Milestones Internal training team. It has supported people to access local colleges and in one case the local University.





4.3 Winner 3: Platform of Families of Children with Disabilities

‘#ParentsToParents’

Organisation name: Platform of Families of Children with Disabilities (in Slovak: *Platforma rodín detí so zdravotným znevýhodnením*)

Short description:

The Platform of Families of Children with Disability (“Platform of Families”) is a civic association actively operating in entire region of Slovak Republic. It was established in 2014 as an informal parental initiative, who based on their own and other parent’s experience saw the need to improve conditions for children with all kinds of disabilities and their families in Slovakia.

The Platform of Families has grown into a strong and respected NGO cooperating with several organisations including state institutions, UNICEF, The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR. The team consists of 50 devoted, mostly part-time working and volunteering, parents and their supporters.

Its main activities encompass:

- » advocating for the rights of families by influencing governmental policies and strategies on the national level;
- » raising awareness towards a better understanding and acceptance of disability within Slovak society;
- » supporting families with children with disabilities through the “InkluLINKA” helpdesk;
- » providing free of charge training sessions and courses for all parents.

Country: Slovakia

Region: All across the country

Website: www.platformarodin.sk

Contact details:

Monika Fričová, Statutory Representative

www.platformarodin.sk

monika.fricova@platformarodin.sk



PLATFORM OF FAMILIES
WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Quote from organisation:

May all the people, including families of children with disabilities, live in a respectful, inclusive, and kind society.

Description of practice:

#ParentsToParents is a unique support network, which has been initiated and run by the Platform of Families since 2019. Within this network, a team of trained peer counsellors, who are parents of children with disabilities, provide valuable peer-to-peer counselling based on their own experience to other parents and family members of children with disabilities. It is a unique project in Slovakia with a country-wide reach, which has already contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of families of children with disabilities more than 5000 times, supporting at least 2200 families, so far. The network includes 43 peer councillors, each of them specialises in a specific topic. Together these councillors cover all regions of Slovakia and all types of disabilities. The network has an ethic code and a code of conduct which involves supervisions and ongoing education of those within the network in line with self-guarding regulations.

Funding:

Project funding by small Slovak donors and UNICEF.

Impact:

The peer network of Platform of Families has already contributed to improvement of the quality of life of families of children with disabilities more than 5000 times and supported at least 2200 families, so far.

Sustainability, success factors and transferability:

The network is at the moment based on volunteer involvement of majority of the peers. Platform of Families is advocating for involving peer counselling to the legislation. The lack of support professionals

opens the chance to involve peers in services in health, social and educational system in the future. The code of conduct, trainings and ethic code are an inspiration for setting up the “peer methodology” system in Slovakia.





4.4 Winner 4: Centre de la Gabrielle MFPass, 'GABLAB, Le living lab de la Gabrielle'

Organisation name: Centre de la Gabrielle MFPass

Short description:

Centre de la Gabrielle is a service provider administrated by Mutualité Fonction Publique Action Santé Social (MFPass). Comprising 12 non-profit structures, it supports over 500 people with neurodevelopmental conditions and works to advance research and expertise in best practices, tools, and materials that are useful to guarantee quality support.

Country: France

Region: Seine-et-Marne (Greater Paris Area)

Website: www.centredelagabrielle.fr

Contact details: Samuel Chardon,
Living lab and Communication Director
samuel.chardon@mfpass.fr

Quote from organisation: *In keeping with social policies, Centre de la Gabrielle is an evolving facility that is actively involved in shaping public policies and implementing changes in these policies. GABLAB allows us to strengthen the involvement of users, families and professionals that form a community of 1000 people.*

Description of practice:

GABLAB Le living lab de la Gabrielle was launched in 2023 and builds on more than 15 successful years of empirical research at Centre de la Gabrielle. The living lab is a dynamic real-life test environment that promotes co-creation and open innovation between key stakeholders of the disability sector – namely users, public authorities, industry, and academia. Its primary objective is to strengthen service users' empowerment.

GABLAB is innovative because it takes a concept widely used in the tech world (the living lab method) and



moulds it to its needs, to create practices rather than products. It is also innovative in that, in a historically institutionalised and hierarchical world, it proposes to include those we support in the decision-making process and guarantees that all voices have the same power at the table. Finally, since no topic is off limits, GABLAB creates an environment where we can ask difficult questions and reexamine facts that are taken for granted.

The GABLAB process can be summarised in four steps.

- (1) First, they use existing channels to collect ideas. At this stage, users and professionals play a key role in identifying potential sources of reflection.
- (2) Secondly, their operational team meets to problematise the ideas. Composed mostly of professionals from the Gabrielle Centre, the role of this team is to assemble the working groups that will discuss the various issues that come up. It is also at this stage that budgetary issues are analysed, deadlines are approved, and human resources are mobilised.
- (3) The third, and perhaps most crucial step of the process, is when the working groups, composed of users, professionals, experts, and academics, meet. Their exchanges must be ethically sound and, if necessary, external expertise may be brought in at a later stage. Not all working groups reach a final decision, but a summary of their recommendations is transmitted to the competent authority for discussion.
- (4) The final stage is the operational implementation of the practice on the ground and the evaluation of the practice. In documenting this final stage, GABLAB assesses the consistency between the expectations that emerged from the working groups and the reality on the ground.

Throughout this process, the Ethical and Scientific Committee guarantees that the Living Lab method is respected. Its members include service users, family representatives, members of the academic community, professionals from the medico-social sector, and partner representatives.

Funding:

GABLAB has received funding from private (Fondation Matmut Paul Bennetot) and public (Agence Régionale de Santé Ile-de-France, European Social Funds) bodies for specific projects. Centre de la Gabrielle also invests in GABLAB's projects and provides operational support.

Impact:

The impact is twofold. On one hand, through their participation in the working groups, users have a direct impact on the shaping and creation of new practices which, in turn, will determine the quality of the services provided. On the other hand, this participatory method contributes to their empowerment and indirectly to their knowledge of citizens' participation techniques, thus enabling them to become full actors in their own lives. Ultimately, the idea is that by involving service users, their families and the professionals who support them in the creation of new practices there will be high quality service provision that improves the well-being of users.

GABLAB also seeks to find reasonable accommodations to ensure that people with psychosocial disabilities have the same rights as others. Additionally, they build

such accommodations in places where there aren't any. GABLAB also has a space for topics like gender identity, inclusive vocabulary, employment for all – viewing them through a lens that allows no one to be left behind. By ensuring that they evolve at the same pace as society, they also aim to build bridges to allow for better inclusion.

Sustainability, success factors and transferability:

Centre de la Gabrielle eventually hopes to carry out all their future research projects using the GABLAB method, and for it to become a structural element of our work. While GABLAB is designed to serve first and foremost their own community of service users, as well as their families and the professionals who support them, they also aim to disseminate the results they achieve through their networks at national and European level to benefit the wider community.

As they serve people with neurodevelopmental conditions, this audience is their target group. However, the social engineering method they are developing should be replicable in settings serving people with different needs. Indeed, by systematically analysing and documenting initiatives, GABLAB enables them to capitalise on the knowledge produced, while promoting the importance of medico-social research. In turn, GABLAB can make available short reports that enable other service providers to apply similar practices in their environment. The replicability of such practices transforms them into products that can benefit the wider community.





4.5 Winner 5: Zukunft trotz Handicap e.V. 'Professional Development/Employment'

Organisation name: Zukunft trotz Handicap e.V.

Short description:

Zukunft trotz Handicap e.V. advocates for the active participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism in shaping their own lives and contributing to society as respected and engaged citizens.



The organisation provides community programmes, supported living, employability, and training services (including catering, housekeeping, and nursery school staff), and counselling services for parents and young adults with intellectual disabilities and autism, focusing on advice and support during the transition period after school. Their services are designed to support and promote the rights of choice in accordance with the UN CRPD. Zukunft trotz Handicap e.V. prepares young adults for active participation (work) in the mainstream labour market and provide ongoing support and guidance as they navigate their journey.

Country: Germany

Region: Bavaria

Website: <https://www.zth-ev.de/>

Contact details: Melika Ahmetovic, Vice-chairperson of Zukunft trotz Handicap
m.ahmetovic@zth-ev.de; melika.ahmetovic@edu.lmu.de

Description of practice:

Entering the mainstream labour market poses a significant challenge for individuals with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities and autism. Despite legal provisions such as Article 3 of the German Basic Law and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, disparities persist in training and employment opportunities. Historically, persons with intellectual disabilities, having traversed special schooling to sheltered workshops, encounter limited prospects in traditional training and employment avenues. Moreover, existing training programmes often fail to accommodate their interests and specific needs, further impeding their access to mainstream employment.

Through their qualification programme, Zukunft trotz Handicap extend an additional educational avenue to young adults with intellectual disabilities, many of whom have primarily experienced employment within sheltered workshops catering to individuals with disabilities.



Quote from organisation: *“Individuals with intellectual disabilities face unique challenges when transitioning into the work life. The ‘Kleine Kita-Brief’ (daycare training programme) and the ‘Kleine Wirtebrief’ (catering training programme) are tailored vocational courses designed specifically for individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism. These programmes aim to equip participants with comprehensive skills necessary for successful employment in childcare or the hotel and catering industry. These training courses are structured to accommodate the individual needs of each participant, providing both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. By breaking down educational barriers, each participant is empowered to pursue employment opportunities aligned with their interests and abilities. Many of our programme graduates have secured internships or are already employed”. - Andrea Hanisch, Chairperson of Zukunft trotz Handicap e.V.*

Presently, they offer two distinct programmes: the “daycare training programme,” preparing individuals for careers in childcare, and the “gastronomy training programme,” equipping participants for roles in the hotel, catering, and housekeeping sectors. Comprising both practical and theoretical components, including a final examination, our programmes certify graduates for entry into these respective professional domains.

The Daycare Training Programme runs for 12 months, and it includes a 6-month internship in the daycare centre, coordinated in cooperation with the organisation “Bildungsimpulse” and implemented in the daycare centres in the region. As for the content of this programme, participants are given personal and vocational motivation support to improve their professional profile, skills and abilities, as well as training on the functioning of the daycare centre (staff, processes, etc.) and on children’s needs, participation, interaction and communication. At the end of the programme, successful participants receive a certificate endorsed by the District of Upper Bavaria.

The Gastronomy Training runs for 8 months (one module per month), as part of a cooperation together with DEHOGA Bavaria and BTW – Bayern Tourist GmbH, taking place at the vocational school for chefs in Munich. The training provides participants with knowledge and skills to catering services from preparing and pouring infusions and cold drinks, to setting a guest table, serving simple cold and hot dishes, as well as serving to and dealing with clients. As one of the results of this training programme, an Inclusion Coffee Shop was opened in May 2023.

Achieving sustainable employment placements subject to social insurance contributions requires tailored support for young adults navigating the open labour market. They collaborate closely with participants to identify suitable organisations and companies based on their aptitudes and skills, facilitating their integration into the workforce. To ease the transition for initial cohorts, Zukunft trotz Handicap built partnerships with various stakeholders.

In response, their programmes offer practical instruction tailored to individual needs and interests, reaching out to underserved social groups lacking traditional training opportunities. Securing cooperation from corporate partners necessitates persuasive efforts, while their extensive network ensures that all available programme slots are filled by individuals from their target demographic.

Funding:

As an association, they initiated and coordinated the above-mentioned projects since 2013, bearing the costs with the help of donations and membership fees.

Impact:

The vocational training programmes for childcare and gastronomy have made a significant impact. These sectors face high demand for skilled workers and are increasingly receptive to innovative approaches for meeting this demand. This concept has garnered attention from organisations across Germany, sparking interest in its adoption and adaptation for other fields such as healthcare. Particularly for childcare and after-school care facilities facing acute shortages of skilled workers, this concept presents a compelling solution. Its transferability to other organisations hinges on maintaining strong relationships with partners and fostering ongoing dialogue among stakeholders.

This approach allows for a holistic reflection on sensitivities and effective resolution of any arising issues. By raising awareness about the potential of individuals with disabilities, they can enhance the willingness to train and employ this demographic, fostering greater societal inclusion and long-term sustainability.

Moreover, fostering inclusivity within the workplace entails fostering social interaction and collaboration within this sphere. By increasing the employment of individuals with disabilities in social institutions or diversifying roles within the catering industry, barriers and prejudices are actively diminishing, cultivating an environment of acceptance and



understanding. This not only enhances workplace dynamics but also enriches the broader social fabric, promoting diversity and inclusion as core values within our society.

Sustainability, success factors and transferability:

The integration of individuals with intellectual disabilities into the workforce extends beyond a mere socio-political obligation for Germany; it stands as a strategic imperative and an economic necessity. These programmes offer invaluable support to skilled labour in these domains, recognising the value that persons with intellectual disabilities and autism bring to the workplace when positioned and supported appropriately. Often, they exhibit heightened

motivation and dedication to their work, surpassing that of their peers.

The transferability and sustainability of our approach extends far beyond individual workplaces, encompassing broader societal impact. By demonstrating the value and effectiveness of integrating persons with disabilities into various sectors, they are able to pave the way for scalable and enduring practices. Through ongoing collaboration and knowledge-sharing with stakeholders, they ensure that their initiatives remain adaptable to diverse contexts and continue to yield positive outcomes. This commitment to transferability and sustainability not only enhances the immediate workplace environment but also fosters long-term societal resilience and inclusivity.



5 Outcomes for winners

We wish to warmly congratulate all the winners of this edition of the EASPD Innovation Awards!

These five practices have all developed greatly innovative and forward-looking projects in line with our 2024 focus on Guaranteeing Choice and Control: Transforming Mental Health and Psychosocial Disability Support.

The winners of this edition of the Innovation Awards have received their award at the EASPD Annual Conference

‘Guaranteeing Choice and Control: Transforming Mental Health and Psychosocial Disability Support’, hosted in Bratislava, Slovakia on 20-21 May 2024.

With these awards, we aim to spotlight the remarkable work of support and social care providers to ensure persons with disabilities can enjoy their human rights on an equal basis to others.

We hope that, like us, you are being inspired by the work of the EASPD Innovation Awards 2024 Winners!





6 Acknowledgements

EASPD would like to thank the following jury members for their time in reviewing all the submitted practices as part of the EASPD Innovation Awards:

- » **Catherine Catry**, UNESCO Chair Manager at Munster Technological University and Consultant at Catherine Catry & Co.
- » **Svetlana Sandberg**, Project Coordinator at TENENET
- » **Lieve Dekempeneer**, Board Member EASPD
- » **Verlee Aendekerk**, Director at HUBBIE
- » **Pep Sole**, Director at Support Girona and Ferran Blanco, Project & Development Officer at Support Girona

7 What's next for innovation at EASPD?

Within EASPD, innovation is a fundamental element that not only inspires but also drives our work and is therefore present in all aspects of the activities we carry out by virtue of supporting the services we represent, from the project development to policy efforts, communication and advocacy strategies, as well as the active circulation of promising practices. Precisely, Social Innovation was the theme of the [EASPD Innovation Awards 2023](#).

Furthermore, and in relation with EASPD commitment on fostering innovation, we have set up our [Knowledge & Innovation Team](#), which aims to coordinate various platforms designed to develop, coordinate and disseminate knowledge and promising practices.

To keep up with our work on innovation, please have a look at the various links below:

We continue to organise **online and in-person events**, including our Knowledge Cafés aimed at giving a voice to service providers and users who want to help our members and partners discover key areas of service provision for persons with disabilities. The upcoming Cafés will tackle quality measurement frameworks, inclusive sports, and innovative ways to discuss sexual rights.

[More information to come here on these EASPD Cafes can be found.](#)

Every year, EASPD coordinates various **studies** designed to help us inform our policy efforts and to ensure that our members have access to up-to-date information on the key areas of our work. [Please visit our website to discover our latest publications.](#)

As a members-led organisation, EASPD seeks to promote activities coordinated and led by our members. The EASPD Lighthouse Network was created to encourage members to share solutions and learn from each other via **peer-learning** activities. These activities focus on bringing together our members with certain expertise, and others who would like to improve their knowledge and capacity.

[Find out more about the Lighthouse Network and how you can participate in future editions here.](#)

Finally, to discover the revamped EASPD Knowledge Hub, make sure to visit our online platform which includes a collection of online courses (MOOCs) pertinent for all actors in the disability support sector, and an e-library hosting hundreds of useful resources.

[Find out more here about the knowledge hub.](#)



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Co-funded by
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