



# **EASPD Innovation Awards**

## **25 Innovative Practices for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**



European Association of  
Service providers for  
Persons with Disabilities



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# Foreword

Over the past 25 years, EASPD has built a network that currently represents over 20,000 support services for persons with disabilities and their families all over Europe. Our members are committed to implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and in doing so, striving to bring about innovation and novel approaches in developing high-quality support services. Support services that promote the full participation and inclusion in society of all persons with disabilities.

To amplify the work delivered by the EASPD team in Brussels, we focus on three pillars: maximising impact over European policy, remaining informed on the latest developments and fostering innovation at all levels of service provision. In line with our vision, the following publication encompasses the principles set by these pillars: the booklet aims to inform our partners and other relevant stakeholders on the 25 most innovative practices developed by our members. Our final objective is to make an impact on the sector by sharing these examples of service providers pushing boundaries in the field.

Innovation has become a key component in all areas of service provision due to a fundamental change in the way services are designed and delivered. However, our work is far from done. To facilitate progress, it is more important than ever that we work closely with the persons with support needs and their families to develop the appropriate services to ensure inclusion. As outlined by the UNCRPD and echoed in numerous acts at national,

**” Innovation has become a key component in all areas of service provision due to a fundamental change in the way services are designed and delivered.**



European, and international level, we must develop high-quality service models which respond to the individual needs of each person. But we must also take into consideration the views and expectations of the beneficiaries themselves. This requires a person-centred approach and integrated health and social care services which fully address the diversity of support needs. Co-production of services should be encouraged throughout the whole sector. By working together and initiating a constant flow of innovative ideas and processes, we can look to realise change. This publication acts as a necessary step in improving knowledge sharing and awareness of promising practices present within the sector.

On behalf of EASPD, I would like to thank all those who participated in the application process. All submissions were of a high calibre, making the decision process difficult. To the 25 chosen practices, you are all ambassadors for innovation in the sector and we thank you for your work. Your dedication and commitment have been spotlighted in this publication as paving the way to inclusion and a full implementation of the UNCRPD. I would also like to thank the jury for their time and effort in undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the 80 practices submitted. Finally, I would also like to thank our two colleagues, Adriana Popa and Marina Antanasiotis, who helped in putting together this publication. I hope it serves as a point of inspiration for many.

**Luk Zelderloo, Secretary General of EASPD**



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**Without change there is no innovation, creativity or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable.”**

— William Pollard

The implementation of the UN Conventions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires a paradigm shift. For support service providers, it means a change in the way services are delivered, in the training needed for staff, in organisational culture, and much more. With the need for change, comes a need for new knowledge and innovative solutions.

To celebrate the association's 25th Anniversary, and to highlight the work of our members, EASPD has launched the first edition of its Innovation Awards. Over the past 25 years EASPD has built a network that currently represents, through its direct members, over 20,000 support services for persons with disabilities and their families all over Europe. Our members are committed to implementing the UN CRPD in transforming their services, and in doing so, striving to bring about innovation and new approaches in developing high-quality services that promote the full participation and inclusion in society of all persons with disabilities.

80 practices were submitted for the Innovation awards. These practices each contribute to the advancement of service provision in one or more of the thematic areas of the EASPD Member Fora which include: Arts and Culture, Early Intervention Education, Employment, Inclusive Living, Person-Centred Technology, Policy Impact and Workforce Development and Human Resources.

This booklet spotlights the 8 winners of the Innovation Awards and 17 other top-rated practices, chosen by the specialised jury put together by EASPD. Each of these practices demonstrate:

- A successful implementation of the UN CRPD at local/ regional/national level through direct services or facilitating ecosystems
- Contribution in providing/enhancing access to high-quality community-based services for persons with disabilities
- Usage of the co-production model with all relevant stakeholders
- Prospects for future activity, sustainability and scaling up

We hope that these practices provide further inspiration to other support services in the delivery of high-quality systems across Europe and beyond.

**James Crowe, President of EASPD**

# Arts for All Cork

## Organisation:

Cope Foundation (Suisha Arts) – Cork, Ireland

## Year of initiation:

2014

## Funding of practice:

'Arts for All Cork' is funded from a range of sources: Cork City Council, Health Service Executive of Ireland (HSE), "Covid Resilience Fund" through the Cork City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Cope Foundation, Cork Education and Training Board (CETB).

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

## Description of practice:

'Arts for All Cork' was created by Cope Foundation's community-based arts initiative Suisha Arts and other partners, as part of the foundation's aim to raise awareness of disability arts and work in the sector. This practice operates within the framework of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), which looks to support the local and community development of Cork City. 'Arts for All' is a strategic group made up of representatives from disability organisations, disability self-advocates, arts organisations, universities and local representatives. The project has grown in momentum, with many of the city's main artistic and cultural players getting involved to address the lack of representation for artists with disabilities and discuss what can be done.

## Problem targeted:

There is a lack of effective representation of disabled and marginalised artists within the Cork creative and cultural scene. Minimal mainstreaming of work created and performed by disabled artists results in poor implementation and awareness of the principles set out by the UNCRPD. Moreover, the arts community can often be highly competitive due to the nature of the funding structures that exist. This results in a lack of infrastructure, lack of cooperation between stakeholders and poor knowledge sharing.

## Contact Information:

Eoin Nash, Manager of Arts and Creative Arts Therapies: [NashE@cope-foundation.ie](mailto:NashE@cope-foundation.ie)

## Solution offered:

'Arts for All Cork' focuses on what Cork and its creative community can do collectively to address issues of marginalisation of artists with disabilities. The group has lobbied for and created new, sustainable pathways for disabled artists to engage with 'mainstream' arts education, art exhibitions and performances. They have advocated for equal payment for disabled artists and access for disabled audiences to city venues. Disabled artists and arts organisations are also invited to attend Disability Equality Trainings led by Suisha Arts with internationally recognised disabled artists. This open communication between the disability community and mainstream arts organisations promotes a safe platform for disabled artists to express their frustration at the social, communicative, attitudinal, and physical barriers that exist. The alliance further highlights the work of disabled artists through events called 'Platform Gatherings' which provide a space for anybody in the arts community and beyond to come and experience the work of marginalised artists.



## Impact and sustainability of practice:

Having gained the respect of many within the disability and arts community, it has been highlighted to the National Government Agency responsible for the LECP as an example of what is possible and a potential model for replication throughout Ireland. This practice has provided a safe and supported way for people accessing services to engage meaningfully with the arts sector, encouraging discourse and knowledge sharing within the sector. This has led to reduced fear of disability and increased opportunities for disabled creatives and arts organisations to work together on progressive projects. To ensure sustainability, it is envisaged that this process can be further developed throughout the EU, exploring projects and providing training to the sector through a range of programmes.

# Gala+IN

## Organisation:

Fundación Grupo SIFU – Barcelona, Spain

## Year of initiation:

2016

## Funding:

Gala tickets and box sales and gala company sponsors

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport.



## Description of practice:

Gala+IN is a Fundación Grupo SIFU project that aims to give visibility and valorise the capabilities of persons with disabilities through art. The event, held on an annual basis, looks to celebrate INtegration, INclusion and INterpretation. This accessible and inclusive event is made up of artists with and without disabilities who are provided the opportunity to display their talents on renowned stages. In this event, unique in its category in Europe, artists help demonstrate that disability does not have to slow down artistic and professional development, pushing for greater awareness amongst the public that disability does not have to set limits.

## Problem targeted:

Fundación Grupo SIFU identified the lack of professional opportunities for people with disabilities and/or at risk of social exclusion. Though the Spanish artistic scene is slowly opening to creators and performers with disabilities, there is still a long path towards reaching full inclusion.

## Solution offered:

The Gala+IN aims to promote an environment in careers of artists are boosted, offering them key opportunities to work in notorious venues as well as facilitate recognition of their talent. Gala+IN's goal is to promote, protect, and ensure a fundamental right for all people to express themselves as well as ensure artists with disabilities have access to platforms to express themselves artistically. In addition, this boosts the development of their professional career and helps generate synergies between the collaborating entities and the artists themselves. This inclusive art event is not the solution to all the problems of artists with disabilities in Spain, but it has established itself as a benchmark of national reference over the last six years.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

Each year the Gala+IN has grown in all aspects of its production. This includes the number of artists involved, audiences reached, number of entities that collaborate with the production and its appearance in the media and social networks. For the 5th edition of Gala+IN in 2020, more than 2,000 people attended, filling the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. The event attracted both regional and national media, reaching more than 9 million people and achieving an economic value of around one million euros. Moreover, the income generated by Gala+IN enabled SIFU to develop the SuperArte scholarship programme, which aims to improve the employability of people with functional diversity through art. This initiative promotes inclusive art, supports artistic training and personal development, and opens new artistic job opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Gala + IN organisation has ambitious plans to expand the project all over the country and to make it an annual event of reference throughout Spain. For its eighth edition, each autonomous community will have the option to celebrate its own Gala.

## Contact Information:

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# 13 m<sup>2</sup> Gallery

## Organisation:

Vocational Training Center MARGARITA - Athens, Greece

## Year of initiation:

2018

## Funding:

EU programs, National funds, Sponsorships, Sales

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation and leisure, Article 27 – Work and employment



## Description of practice:

The 13m2 Gallery is not only a gallery. It is a space of training for people with intellectual disabilities and acts as the first step before they enter the labour market. Beneficiaries who wish to find a job can join 13m2's team on a weekly basis for 4–5 hour trainings. Training sessions focus on skill strengthening and self-empowerment on topics including customer service, the use of cashiers and money exchange. Support and training sessions are also provided to those who wish to develop their skills within artistic and cultural career paths, such as museum guides, exhibition facilitators and invigilators. In the future, 13m2 Gallery aims to support artists in creating their digital portfolios/CV's and sharing them with art spaces, other artists, and curators to successfully place their art in exhibitions and galleries.

## Problem targeted:

People with disabilities are under-represented within the Arts and Culture sector workforce in all role types and levels of seniority, as well as within the creative industries workforce. Long-term unemployment is still of serious concern in Greece especially for young people with disabilities; according to the National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP) in Greece, 60% of 25–29 year olds with a severe disability are currently unemployed. Few organisations have policies which create improvements in the retention and recruitment of employees with disabilities.

## Contact Information:

Eva Dermitzaki, Project Manager at Arts Department:  
[arts@eamargarita.gr](mailto:arts@eamargarita.gr)

## Solution offered:

The practice pushes for greater diversity in Greece. Diversity can act as a driver of innovation, increase financial performance, and act as a catalyst in creating a more positive and productive culture. Art is not just a medium of self-understanding and expression for the beneficiaries, but also supports the communication and the autonomy of people with intellectual disabilities. This practice looks to enhance the employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities as well as tackle the limited arts education and training opportunities. The model further highlights the need to tackle isolation among artists with disabilities and highlight success stories.

## Impact and sustainability of practice:

Hiring persons with disabilities has several benefits. For the staff with disabilities, being employed can have a positive effect on their life through a greater degree of social inclusion, self-empowerment, skills recognition, and improvement of social behaviour. More specific to the field of arts and culture, interactions with other artists and self-expression through art can relieve stress and significantly decrease anxiety. The practice aims to achieve cultural and financial sustainability through established partnerships between employees and employers from the arts field such as cultural organisations, galleries, and private companies. The practice aims to develop a train-the-trainer curriculum, in which artists with disabilities with already developed skills can train newcomers. In addition, the artists with or without disabilities, who exhibit their work at 13m2 Gallery sign a contract with MARGARITA. This contract ensures that a percentage of the income that derives from sales is invested in the development, growth, and continuation of the practice.

# The Forum of Organisations and Parents for Children with Disabilities

## Organisation:

Beit Issie Shapiro - Ra'anana, Israel

## Year of Initiation:

2002

## Funding:

Philanthropic donations to Beit Issie Shapiro

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 7 – Children with disabilities

## Description of practice:

The Forum of Organisations and Parents for Children with Disabilities is a coalition of over 60 organisations and parents who work together to promote policies and legislation that benefit young children with disabilities. The coalition aims to develop fruitful collaboration between the various disability groups working for the benefit of the disability sector, as well as encourage real dialogue between various demographic groups concerned.

## Problem targeted:

The population of Israel is 8 million, out of which 250,000 children have a significant disability that affects their day-to-day functioning. The coalition was set up to address the challenges faced, as well as the lack of services and subsidies available to young children with disabilities and their families.

## Solution offered:

The coalition works to ensure that the UNCRPD is implemented into Israeli legislation regarding children with disabilities. Especially at the arguably most critical age of development. It does this by promoting legislation for all children with disabilities, particularly in the field of early intervention, so that these services are funded by the government and can be accessed by all who need them. An innovative aspect of the practice is that the parents take part in the legislative process by attending parliamentary discussions and working with government officials and legislators.

## Contact Information:

Adv. Valerie Zilka, Promoter of Policy & Coordinator of the Forum of Organisations and Parents for Children with Disabilities: [valeriez@beitissie.org.il](mailto:valeriez@beitissie.org.il)

## Impact and Sustainability of the practice:

Over the past 19 years, the coalition has promoted 15 laws and regulations that have impacted over half a million people. These regulations have further provided subsidies or services in the amount of over 100 million euros a year. Many of the existing Israeli laws or regulations in the field of early intervention have been promoted by this coalition. Examples include:

- Ensuring each child is entitled to a support aid no matter which day-care centre they attend, enabling full inclusion for young children and their families in their own communities.
- Establishing the right for transportation to rehabilitative day-care centres and the criteria for safe transportation, positively affecting around 3500 beneficiaries.
- Amending the existing sick day leave law providing and expanding benefits for working parents of children with disabilities, impacting some 500,000 beneficiaries.
- Modifying the regulations guiding rehabilitative day-care centres to include dietary counselling and guidance, tailored to the child's unique needs, impacting some 3500 beneficiaries.

The coalition has established a strong reputation in the eyes of the political establishment, as a holder of knowledge and as a partner. It is involved in fora aimed at designing policies for the benefit of children with disabilities and continues to actively promote social change through further collaboration between people with disabilities and their families, government, private and non-profit sectors. The work of the coalition has been presented at the UN and other international conferences and forums.



# Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) In the Community for Preschool Children and their Families

## Organisation:

Theotokos Foundation – Athens, Greece

## Year of Initiation:

2016

## Funding:

Funded mainly through the Theotokos Foundation's own funds

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 7 – Children with disabilities, Article 23 – Respect for home and the family, Article 25 – Health

## ■ Description of practice:

'ECI in the Community' is a programme operating across 20 nursery day-care centres targeted for children, aged between 1,5-4 years old, and their families. Organised in cooperation with the Theotokos Foundation and the neighbouring municipalities, its principal aim is the early detection and intervention of children who are at risk of developmental delay or emotional difficulties. Effective early intervention works to ensure the healthy development of the child, empower their families, support teachers, and promote deinstitutionalisation.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

In Greece, the referral process of ECI services largely relies on parents taking the initiative when concerned about their child's general development. This process is limited in its capacity and has significant economic implications, as the cost of therapy programmes is high and is covered mainly by families. Moreover, the ECI process is not legislated yet in Greece, meaning little awareness-raising is done on the early identification of difficulties. It is therefore necessary for such ECI processes to focus on the prevention of developmental, emotional, and psycho-social difficulties, to implement early detection activities with practical evidence-based tools and to establish procedures ensuring a timely referral.

## ■ Solution offered:

The practice is a synergy and collaboration between the interdisciplinary team of Theotokos, the staff of day-care centres and the parents. These ECI services are made

available as geographically close as possible to the families and are cost-free. The service has further provided the necessary screening and assessment tools that will help specialists, healthcare support teams, staff of nursery day centres and parents to identify difficulties as early as possible and seek access to ECI services.

The methodology employed is made up of six phases:

- (1) Raising awareness on the importance of prevention and the usefulness of the programme.
- (2) Conducting screenings at nursery day centres.
- (3) Performing assessments of children that have been identified as being at risk of developmental delay or emotional difficulties.
- (4) Consultation with parents.
- (5) Referral for further assessment/diagnosis of children that have been identified as having difficulties in more than one developmental area or present signs of emotional difficulties.
- (6) Providing individualised intervention for children and their families through the help of an interdisciplinary team.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

Within the past 6 years, the Theotokos Foundation has assessed over 1600 children, from which 15% showed difficulties. Theotokos has managed to build a strong, collaborative relationship between parents, teachers and the children based on trust and the empowerment of families and educational staff. Improving the abilities of all stakeholders will allow for more timely intervention and as a result, stronger social inclusion of children. Over time, the programme can be scaled up by creating a guide on the prevention and early detection for professional health care and support staff. The guide will have the flexibility of being used by any professional that supports educational staff and/or is responsible for the supervision of children in day-care nurseries, therefore broadening the number of children that can undergo screening and assessment.

## Contact information:

Mirella Giannakopoulou, Head of Early Intervention  
Department: [mgiannakopoulou@theotokos.gr](mailto:mgiannakopoulou@theotokos.gr)

# Virtual Education and Therapy at Beit Issie Shapiro during COVID-19: An Immediate Solution to an Unexpected Challenge



## Organisation:

Beit Issie Shapiro, Country: Ra'anana, Israel

## Year of Initiation:

2020

## Funding:

Beit Issie Shapiro's own funds and fundraising efforts

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 7 – Children with disabilities, Article 24 – Education, Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport

## ■ Description of practice:

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck Israel, a major priority of Beit Issie Shapiro was to provide immediate support to children with disabilities and their parents by creating “virtual schools”. The goal was to provide support to the families, offer social opportunities for the children and maintain a semblance of a daily educational and therapeutic routine.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

Israel has experienced three national lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic and this situation has been tough for many. For families of children with disabilities it has been even more difficult as they often require one-to-one supervision or assistance to complete daily activities. The challenge was to provide the families with solutions that would support the children's participation in educational and therapeutic activities whilst simultaneously addressing the social and emotional needs of the children and families. Given their lack of prior experience with online therapy or education, it was necessary to develop solutions that would be easy to implement yet also provide adequate, appropriate, and accessible support for the children.

## ■ Solution offered:

As part of the virtual school programme, three YouTube channels containing hundreds of videos in Hebrew and

in Arabic were launched. Each channel included a range of activities such as morning circles, language and math lessons, and therapeutic activities. Videos were created by educational and therapeutic staff. The videos were often accompanied by complementary activities, with extra materials being sent to the families in a variety of formats to accommodate their accessibility needs. Parents also received direct support and training from their child's teachers and therapists on several topics including the use of assistive equipment, ideas for leisure and educational activities to support active participation in the home environment.

To reduce the learning curve needed to adjust to the online learning environment, the programme was based on mainstream technologies and software that families and students were already familiar with. It was also deemed necessary to provide opportunities for online social interaction and effective ideas for play and leisure activities at home. This supported families to endure the long hours at home.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

The ‘virtual schools’ provided a much-needed online learning solution for families of children with disabilities. YouTube statistics highlighted that the original ‘virtual school’ playlists reached over 450,000 views in total since March 2020. Additionally, Beit Issie's latest video series provides a virtual summer programme for very young children on a mainstream TV channel. The 11 videos released so far in this project have received over 22,000 views in total. To encourage information sharing, the practice has been shared with professionals located in Israel and abroad, motivating others in the field to focus on remote learning and therapy for young children with disabilities.

## Contact information:

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# TOL Dual - Transition towards open labour market =

## Organisation:

Chance B - Gleisdorf, Austria

## Year of Initiation:

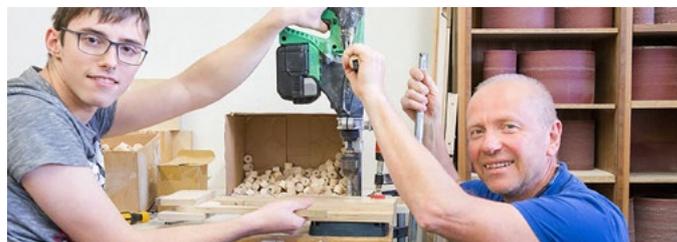
2012

## Funding:

Styrian Government - Funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 24 – Education, Article 27 – Work and Employment



## Description of practice:

The TOL Dual programme is a service for people with disabilities with support needs (mainly people with learning difficulties). The programme aims to accompany people with disabilities in the transition from sheltered workshops to the open labour market. The target group are mainly young people with disabilities who live in Styria and are classified as 'unemployable' on the Austrian labour market. The project is developed around two fundamental principles. First, the pathway for people with disabilities into employment is successful if cooperation with companies in the open labour market is established from the beginning. Support must be offered by the service provider for both people with disabilities and the companies. Second, sustainable integration into the open labour market requires the empowerment of people with disabilities and official verification of skills. This ensures that in case of a job change or internal career development, the acquired skills are acknowledged by potential employers.

## Problem Targeted:

About 25,000 people in Austria are still classed as 'unemployable' and are supported in sheltered workshops. People with disabilities who currently claim benefits under the Styrian Disability Act mostly belong to this target group. These people often lack formal qualifications or have few education and training opportunities open to them. Future employers should be free of concerns when hiring people with disabilities who do not have a recognised educational qualification. It is therefore necessary to make the skills and competencies of persons with disabilities visible.

## Solution offered:

The programme is designed to provide participants with trainings on integration into the areas of gardening, retail, hotel business, office administration and crafts. These trainings are subject to an 'assignment procedure' and the learning outcomes are officially certified using an online competency recording tool. Participants can experience a real career orientation process: users receive feedback through frequent evaluations of their current skill levels and are free to decide on their future profession and field of work.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

Knowledge and experience gained from the TOL Dual programme will contribute towards future development of projects on the professionalisation and development of soft skills training for people with disabilities. Especially projects with a focus on integration into the open labour market. It is important to ensure the future viability of this approach. It can only succeed if people have a positive educational experience and self-efficacy experiences in acquiring new skills. The qualifications acquired and the recognition of competencies provides participants with sustainable career opportunities and further alleviates any concerns about what the future workforce is capable of. Chance B is currently in the process of establishing an Austria-wide network to share the results, ideas, curricula and experiences of the programme more readily.

## Contact information:

Michael Longhino, Vice CEO:  
[Michael.Longhino@chanceb.at](mailto:Michael.Longhino@chanceb.at)

# Supported Apprenticeship

## Organisation:

LADAPT – Pantin, France

## Year of initiation:

1992

## Funding:

Subsidy from the OPCO (Operator of competencies)

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community, Article 24 – Education, Article 27 – Work and employment

## Description of practice:

LADAPT designed and implemented the Support Apprenticeship system when faced with the need for a solution to support the professional transition of people with disabilities. It aims to bring those who are distanced from the mainstream labour market closer through apprenticeship contracts. The unique element of this practice is its consideration of the entire ecosystem revolving around the person concerned, making it possible to support not only the apprentice with their administrative procedures, but also the employer and training centre.

## Problem Targeted:

Despite the legislative framework in force and the progress made in recent years, persons with disabilities continue to face high unemployment rates compared to people without disabilities. They are often excluded from the mainstream labour market often due to discrimination and lack of support. The Supported Apprenticeship system is designed not only to support and guarantee a smooth transition into employment (from education to employment or professional transitions) but also to prevent termination of contracts and thus secure career paths.

## Solution offered:

The practice aims to ease the transition process and access to the mainstream labour market using a person-centred approach. This approach facilitates access to training by supporting and accompanying any potential apprentice with a disability up to the point when they secure employment.

The professional integration adviser (CIP) initiates a process of co-production both with the potential apprentice with a disability and their family and eventually, gets in touch with the various stakeholders involved. Stakeholders involved in the process include apprenticeship training centres (CFA), trainers, disability referents in the company, employers, organisations specialising in employment, etc. These actors can provide clear support and strong points of contact for the apprentice, facilitating a smoother transition towards employment. Each of the stages undertaken is assessed through points of monitoring and evaluation to validate the course.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

A sociological study carried out in Brittany highlighted the direct impact of this practice on the employability of people with disabilities. According to a 2009 report, on average, 400 apprentices per year benefit from this scheme and 80% of them have found a job at the end of the apprenticeship. As this practice has proved its worth in the Brittany region, LADAPT has been commissioned by the Ministry of Labour to model and spread the practice across the nation. Indeed, the practice represents an effective means of ensuring professional transitions (from education to employment or from one job to another), securing careers and preventing breaches of contracts. LADAPT now aims to publish a guide to be used on both local and national levels that proposes a methodology for implementing supported learning in phases whilst considering all needs of the person concerned.

## Contact information:

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[tagaully.hickmah@ladapt.net](mailto:tagaully.hickmah@ladapt.net)

# Independent living pedagogy - PéVA®

## Organisation:

L'ADAPT - Pantin, France

## Year of initiation:

1996

## Funding:

Funded by the departmental council and the regional health agency

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community, Article 23 – Respect for home and the family, Article 24 – Education

## Description of practice:

PéVA® is a 3-step educational training course intended for people with a severe motor disability who wish to acquire an independent life 'at home'. The course offers an innovative approach centred on the individual. The project's key objective is to offer persons with a severe disability, following 4 years of training, an autonomous and independent life in an ordinary home adapted to their functional abilities. The training is traditionally structured around 3 stages consisting of 21 training modules followed by a rotational living arrangement. These stages are:

- (1) Move into an apartment within the Institut du Mai.
- (2) Move into a second accommodation in the city of Chinon.
- (3) Live in an apartment in the city of their choice.

Throughout the 3 stages, each client relies on a team of trainers made up of counsellors, occupational therapists, nurses, nursing assistants and a coordinator. Following the final stage, the team continues to support the client for as long as it takes to pass the baton to the social network in the city of installation.

## Problem Targeted:

Structured and organised support actions that allow people with disabilities to achieve complete autonomy were lacking. Protected environments created a certain dependence and obstructed an effective and full entry into mainstream life. As a result, PéVA® is based on continuous experimentation and practical experience to 'manage' its global social environment.

## Solution offered:

PéVA® has adopted a methodology centred on the choice of the person whose goal is full integration and participation in society through the acquisition of complete autonomy. The person chooses their residence in an ordinary environment and is accompanied throughout the process. PéVA® facilitates training in the techniques of all aspects of mobility for persons with disabilities to acquire autonomy in society. The independence and autonomy acquired by PéVA® facilitates the clients to be on an equal basis with persons without disabilities in providing them with the right to a private home. This opens the way for a family life in complete autonomy, which would have been difficult in an institution.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

This training has enabled more than 160 people to live at home. Participants better develop the activities and social relations within their community, which has greatly benefited the conditions of their social participation. The results of the PéVA® has attracted funders, therefore guaranteeing its sustainability over time. Soon, the regional health agency (public funding) aims to support an off-shoot of the PéVA® on a larger scale across France.

## Contact information:

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[tagaully.hickmah@ladapt.net](mailto:tagaully.hickmah@ladapt.net)

# Implementation of smart assistive Augmented Reality work and training stations

## Organisation:

Lichtwerk – Hooglede, Belgium

## Year of initiation:

2017

## Funding:

Lichtwerk's own funds and government subsidies

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 27 - Work and Employment

## Description of practice:

Lichtwerk's goal is to create an inclusive labour market so that people with disabilities, and other individuals with a certain distance to the labour market have access to paid employment. To achieve this, Lichtwerk provides smart assistive Augmented Reality work and training stations, powered by LightGuide AR software. This solution has so far been installed in social enterprises, manufacturing companies, schools, and training centres.

## Problem Targeted:

Work integration social enterprises (WISEs) must continuously adapt to a changing global industry. The orders they receive from their industrial customers are more diverse than before, and the requirement for high-quality products is only increasing. Moreover, students in special needs secondary education face increased difficulties in finding a job in WISEs compared to before. Implementation of LightGuide technology can help these target groups find a job by providing a more specialised training that is easier to adapt to differing job requirements, and hence more efficient to cater for a changing labour market.



## Solution offered:

Lichtwerk's smart assistive Augmented Reality work and training stations guide operators with cognitive, developmental, intellectual, or mental impairments, but also non-native speakers or people resuming their job after severe illness to perform new tasks in a simple manner. The solution offers 'cognitive support' through the projection of digital work instructions on any work surface, providing operators with visual guidance, feedback, and confirmation. This helps them to better learn new complex processes. The solution replaces written and oral work instructions with an intuitive and intelligent guidance programme that complies with the highest quality standards and makes the workspace safer and more inclusive. The assistive technologies provided by Lichtwerk can be used as permanent support, but also for (re) training and educational purposes.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

The assistive technology has a positive impact on the operator's well-being, minimising the stress experienced when learning or executing complex tasks. It also encourages them to be more autonomous in their work. The technology contributes to a more inclusive labour market, as more people with a disability (for whom the distance to paid work would be too big without assistive technology) can find employment in the social or regular economy. The implementation of LightGuide in educational settings contributes to this inclusiveness since it makes the transition to the labour market easier.

Besides selling smart assistive AR work and training stations, Lichtwerk assists companies and vocational education training centres in the digital transformation process as well as in the setting up of digital work instructions. The instructions and training stations can be adapted to new tasks and new employees, making it a modular, future-proof system. Lichtwerk is now looking to expand its activities by working with international partners to reach more customers and push for more diversity across the economy.

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# Un Rodilla Diferente

## Organisation:

A LA PAR Foundation - Madrid, Spain

## Year of Initiation:

2019

## Funding:

A LA PAR Foundation

## Link to UNCRPD:

Articles 27 - Work and employment, Article 28 - Adequate standard of living and social protection

## Description of practice:

The practice is a social economy initiative managed entirely by people with intellectual disabilities. It constitutes a solid and profitable business model that aims to become a benchmark for social entrepreneurship. 'RODILLA' is a chain of 156 informal, artisan, healthy and quality restaurants throughout Spain that serve as a meeting point for all citizens and aim to guarantee the economic and social autonomy of the persons with intellectual disabilities they employ.

## Problem Targeted:

The problem addressed by this practice relates to the socio-economic exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. The practice addresses the following challenges:

- Non-inclusive selection processes based on job interviews and tests instead of considering practical performance tests.
- Many digital tools are inaccessible, which represents a new difficulty for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Availability of low-paid, non-quality jobs in precarious working conditions for people with intellectual disabilities, including part-time or short duration.
- Lack of awareness-raising about the role and added value of including people with disabilities in the labour market and in society.

## Solution offered:

In 2019, A LA PAR Foundation and RODILLA foundation opened the first restaurant developed by staff with intellectual disabilities nationwide. All workers benefit from supported employment. Moreover, a job coach visits at least once a week to check on job performance, the relationship between team members, and discuss how the employee is feeling and adjusting. To ensure successful implementation, the practice provides the workforce with ongoing job training to enable them to support persons with special needs related to intellectual disability. Special care is taken to ensure compliance in matters of accessibility (visual aids, cash registers adapted with icons to ensure cognitive accessibility), equal opportunities and inherent dignity. The success of the practice lies in the incorporation of people with intellectual disabilities into the decision-making chain from the start.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

The partnership has resulted in the creation of fourteen jobs, twelve of which are taken on by people with disabilities across three different job categories: sandwiches, vendors, and managers. The restaurant receives approximately 2,000 customers per week through both in-person and online sales. As a result of the practice, workers have become more independent, with two employees now able to fully support their children.

The practice has helped to change the image of people with disabilities from passive recipients of aid to active service providers through their work. RODILLA provides lifelong learning opportunities for support. Additionally, as part of a service provided by Wizink Bank, they can promote further training resources for staff to enhance their skills and engage in catering, increasing their career prospects. The experience further allows its workers to enhance their CV with real work experience and apply for other job opportunities as well to improve their lives.

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# FOKUS and SMaRT =

## Organisation:

BBRZ - Vocational Education and Rehabilitation Center - Graz, Austria

## Year of initiation:

2020 (FOKUS), 2021 (SMaRT)

## Funding:

FOKUS – Developed and financed in close cooperation with the Styrian Social Ministry Service. SMaRT – Financed by the city of Graz

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 27 – Work and employment



## Description of practice:

To support the transition of persons with disabilities back into the labour market, BBRZ has developed two unique services offered to persons on the autism spectrum. FOKUS (a maximum 26-weeks programme) aims to strengthen the work-oriented and social skills of people on the autism spectrum, helping them to develop a focused career perspective. The clients spend approximately 25 hours per week in primarily group settings but also in individual coaching sessions, looking at how to improve social skills and effectively handle their emotions within the work context. Parallel to this, SMaRT is a 6-month programme which addresses persons who already possess a strong career perspective, job-relevant knowledge, and the necessary social skills. Sessions instead revolve around free counselling for companies on the topic of employment and the autism spectrum, as well as individual coaching and placement for the affected people.

## Problem Targeted:

It is estimated that approximately 80% of persons with high-functioning autism are unemployed. Few services exist that are tailored to the needs of persons on the autism spectrum, particularly ones focused on how to gain and/or maintain employment. This target group was usually co-managed in services for people with psychiatric diagnoses, often without appropriately trained staff and with little opportunity to address their needs.

## Solution offered:

BBRZ's established projects aim to provide peer-learning sessions as well as individual and group coaching specifically tailored to the target group. Sessions are managed by autism-specific trained professionals and focus on social skills for the work context as well as obtaining and securing a job. The practice has pursued a holistic and increasingly individual, tailor-made and competence-seeking/resource-oriented approach, involving close cooperation with companies on the labour market. These companies provide valuable information about what is required of workers as part of different professions and help identify niches for persons on the autistic spectrum. BBRZ can then work with the beneficiaries to find jobs willing to train them and that match their skillset. Additionally, clients can participate further in neurofeedback, health and creative workshops and occupational therapy.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

The services promote social skills and improve integration in group dynamics. As a result, clients feel empowered and better equipped to face the labour market. Persons on the autism spectrum who are well-integrated in a company can provide valuable perspectives and thereby encourage a more diverse mindset in the workplace. The sustainability of the practices is demonstrated by an increasing demand and interest from various funding bodies to collaborate with BBRZ, ensuring further high-quality support for the target group.

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# Support service for women with disabilities who are victims of discrimination and/or violence

## Organisation:

AIAS Bologna onlus - Bologna, Italy

## Year of Initiation:

2020

## Funding:

Private funding from Italian Protestant Waldesian Church and co-funding by AIAS Bologna and MondoDonna

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 16 - Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse, Article 6 - Women with Disabilities

## ■ Solution offered:

This service aims to overcome the shortcomings of traditional services that tend to provide standardised solutions which do not account for the individual woman and the specifics of her situation. To cater for these needs, a multidisciplinary team is formed, which includes experts on gender violence together with experts in disability. Moreover, the service has established national networks with other local entities, associations, professionals and policymakers. The combination of these elements better enable the service to effectively observe the unique needs and conditions of each individual woman and provide flexible and complex responses. Communication channels put into place have lowered the accessibility barriers for victims in accessing the service, allowing for more victims to be supported.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

On a policy level, this service has led to the inclusion of the 'disability' variable in data collections on anti-violence in the metropolitan area of Bologna. This is of great significance, as a quantification of cases will allow for greater visibility of the issue. Initial results of this can already be seen through the inclusion of the topic of gender and disability in the political agenda and creation of a policy working group. Specific training sessions to engage professionals on this topic are held regularly, receiving high participation. The key success element of this experience is the collaboration and the sharing of knowledge between organisation dealing with disability and experts/organisation dealing with gender-based violence. The organisation is aiming to further scale the operations to new regions and cities.

## ■ Description of practice:

The project is part of a collaboration between AIAS Bologna and MondoDonna and involves the setting up of a support service which all women with disabilities can easily access. These women can benefit from a flexible and tailored response to their situation of discrimination and/or violence. This support service and the parallel training activities aim to help girls and women with disabilities to better understand their gender identity, body, and needs, as well as their rights to friendly, emotional, and sexual relationships. The programme encourages the recognition of situations of violence and helps to build effective support for the victims through a combination of social service workers, and professionals including law enforcement and the local community.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

Reports at national and European level show that women and girls with disabilities are more likely to become victims of gender-based violence, in particular domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. It is more difficult for women with disabilities to report such cases, especially when the violence is carried out by the person taking care of her, and on which her own survival depends. In many cases, the women themselves do not recognise the violence or discrimination experienced. Furthermore, professionals (social service workers, lawyers or administrative staff) often do not consider women with disabilities as possible victims hence there is a lack of structural pathways and operating modes that take into consideration their needs as victims of domestic violence.

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# Assistance: UNCRPD compliant mechanism and social service for supported decision making

## Organisation:

Support-Girona - Girona, Catalonia, Spain

## Year of initiation:

Active since 2011

## Funding:

Catalan Government

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 12 – Equal recognition before the law, Article 23 – Respect for home and the family

## ■ Solution offered:

The model is based on person-centred and supported decision-making approaches. The users are involved in the design of their support plan in cooperation with the frontline staff. The programme acts as a facilitator and promotes the engagement of the users in community-based services, empowering individuals to use services on their own. 'Assistance' develops a new paradigm of services based on the will and preferences of the individual offering the person a real opportunity to exercise choice and control over the way they want to receive support. Over time, 'Assistance' solves the problem of traditional services creating 'forced relationships' with the individual and instead developing a 'natural bond' with the user.

## ■ Description of practice:

'Assistance' is a voluntary legal mechanism to receive supported decision-making under the Catalan Civil Code that respects the legal capacity of individuals who request support. The person has the right to select the person or entity whom they wish to be assisted by and in which spheres of his or her life. 'Assistance' can be formalised via notary or by a judge in a voluntary process. Importantly, the judge must comply with the will and preferences of the individual both in terms of respecting the assistant that the person has chosen as well as where/how the person wants to be supported. Every Catalan citizen has the right to access 'Assistance'.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

'Assistance' solves the problem of not having, until September 2021, a formal alternative available in the legal framework to 'guardianship' and 'curatorship', as both mechanisms restrict and/or modify the legal capacity of the individual. Traditionally, Support-Girona has supported individuals dealing with complex situations due to their personal situation or because no one in their social environment is able to provide support. In these extreme contexts, people are often reluctant to receive support as they fear being misunderstood or losing their freedom and autonomy.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

'Assistance' has shown that support can be provided in extremely complex situations without limiting legal capacity and using rights-restrictive tools provided by obsolete mechanisms. Moreover, opposite to representative measures, 'Assistance' offers a temporary measure, meaning the user can choose when to terminate the relationship with the professional. According to data from the Girona region, the procedures where this voluntary measure has been requested by the person on a voluntary basis are increasing every year. In September 2021, a new legal framework (Spanish "Ley 8/2021 on the reform of civil and procedural legislation to support persons with disabilities in exercising their legal capacity" and Catalan "Law Decree 19/2021, adapting the Catalan Civil Code to the reform on the procedure to modify legal capacity"). As the central mechanism of the Catalan legislation, it is expected that the number of 'assistances' will increase.

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# Open Space: Restarting processes of social inclusion

## Organisation:

Support-Girona - Girona, Spain (Catalonia)

## Year of initiation:

2017

## Funding:

Primarily Support-Girona's own funds as well as private donations.

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 15 - Freedom of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment Article 16 - Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse, Article 17 - Protecting the integrity of the person, Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community, Article 26 – Habilitation and rehabilitation, Article 28 – Adequate standard of living and social protection

## Description of practice:

'Open Space' is a new community-based service and example of public-private cooperation between Support-Girona and the Public Mental Health Service Provider (IAS). 'Open Space' offers a coercion-free alternative that enables individuals with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities living in extreme social exclusion to receive necessary support (legal, social, health and leisure). This enables them to live independently and be included in the community by actively participating in the design of their own inclusion plan. The workforce is a mixture of mental health nurses, social educators or social workers from the public mental health services and Support-Girona. The service offers a very flexible, needs-oriented, and non-institutional alternative to the rigid and over-regulated existing services which are often inaccessible to persons with disabilities in need of support.

## Problem Targeted:

The practice addresses problems faced by individuals who are repeatedly readmitted into clinical units due to conflicts with their social environment resulting from situations of extreme exclusion such as homelessness, lack of coverage of basic needs, and lack of social relations. Most of these individuals cannot benefit from other social and mental health services due to rigid admission and operating rules that pose an insurmountable barrier for them.

## Solution offered:

'Open Space' offers these individuals voluntary access service, with only one rule related to violent behaviour, to establish a relationship based on trust with professionals. The service provides the person with a free access space where they may receive basic services like showers, food and clean clothes, whilst simultaneously connecting with professionals who can support them. The support provided helps the individuals to increase their self-awareness, increase personal routine management and develop a social network to make the first steps on a transition towards an independent living framework.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

In 2020, 85% of participants who used the 'Open Space' service did not subsequently need acute or subacute mental health units, reducing the pressure (financial, human resources, etc.) on clinical resources and facilitating smoother transitions back into the community. Of the individuals using the service, only 16% had a stable home before partaking in it. Following the usage of the service, the number has risen to 72%. Hence, the service has shown its efficiency in changing detrimental patterns of the users. The reduction in the use of public services further incentivises governments to divert funding towards community-based services like 'Open Space', thus ensuring greater opportunities for expansion of the service (increased user base, mainstreaming the model). Further, the Catalan Government has recently launched a plan titled 'PAICSAMAEC' (Integral management of high complexity mental health and addiction situations) which highlights the need for the development of services based on the 'Open Space' experience.

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# SWALLOW Service

## Organisation:

Hand in Hand Foundation - Budapest, Hungary

## Year of Initiation:

2005

## Funding:

Primarily funded by the Human Resource Ministry of Hungary

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community



## Description of practice:

The SWALLOW Service provides periodic support within the homes of families raising people with disabilities in Hungary, offering a range of services including home care, supervision and other temporary services all of which are available 24/7.

## Problem Targeted:

Caring for a child with a disability demands an enormous amount of effort by the family members, who often need to sacrifice their jobs and free time to be able to sufficiently take care of those who need additional support. Moreover, many of these families have limited access to the necessary community-based services therefore needing to consult specialist centres which are often located far from the public. This leads to further distancing from mainstream society. As a result, these families may not have the time needed to lead their everyday lives.

## Solution offered:

The SWALLOW staff are well-equipped and experienced in supporting persons with disabilities, enabling them to bond easily and build strong relationships with the family members. The Hand in Hand Foundation is responsible for a general methodology for the whole service system which is delivered by 10 service providers across Hungary. To ensure accountability and transparency of the service, service providers are validated by the Hand in Hand Foundation, annually audited, and receive trainings throughout the year. The service also has its own information technology (IT) support system that helps to organise and manage the service itself and to collect demographic and statistical data.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

The service currently caters for 300 families, offering each one with at least 12 hours of support per month. The service is family-centred, and provides the personal assistance needed to prevent exclusion from the community which can lead to further problems including anxiety, depression, and poverty. The families who have received the services so far have provided positive feedback. SWALLOW has allowed the families to take the time to (re)connect with society and maintain their full-time jobs whilst remaining assured that their family members are being well-taken care of. In terms of scaling up, Hand in Hand Foundation has been continuously lobbying since 2007 for the extension of the service throughout Hungary.



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# Waymap App

## Organisation:

Waymap - London, United Kingdom

## Year of initiation:

2018

## Funding:

Backed by both private and institutional investors

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 9 - Accessibility, Article 20 – Personal Mobility

## ■ Description of practice:

Waymap is the world's only navigation app for smartphones that can accurately guide people both indoors and outdoors. The app allows for the detection of the location of a user to an accuracy of up to 1 metre in order to provide audio instructions. The app requires no signal or need for physical infrastructure installed in the built environment. This level of accuracy is necessary for persons with vision impairments and persons with other disabilities to travel independently and with confidence. They can explore cities, use public transportation and navigate any indoor space that has been mapped.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

Poor mobility is a cause of severe social exclusion and poor life outcomes, reducing access to employment and negatively affecting health and social life. According to Guide Dogs UK, 35% of blind people in the UK never leave home without assistance from another person, and of those that do travel independently, approximately 50% limit themselves to 2 or 3 routes that they know well. This problem is set to become more apparent with an increase in both the average age of the population and the number of persons diagnosed with a disability.

## ■ Solution offered:

Locating someone accurately indoors and outdoors has traditionally required dedicated infrastructure, devices such as Bluetooth Low-Energy Beacons and GPS systems. All, however, are affected by complex environments when occluded and reflected signals can interfere with distance calculations. Instead, Waymap's technology for indoor location tracking enables the app to deliver the best guidance and user experience available on a smartphone. Its employment of the technique 'dead reckoning' allows it to combine sensor data available on smartphones and integrate it with map data to track real-time movement. Waymap removes the need for complex infrastructure which allows it to increase its operational resilience, reduce maintenance overheads and, perhaps most importantly, provide guidance for a user's entire journey through multiple environments.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

In 2019, Waymap delivered an advanced wayfinding trial in Los Angeles, California which successfully demonstrated the efficacy of the system. Following the trial, 85% of participants said that they would be confident using the system to find their way through a public place they were unfamiliar with. The trial also highlighted the potential for the technology to increase the use of public transportation by people with poor mobility. 96% of trial participants said that they would be more likely to use public transport on their own if Waymap was available. This technology aligns with the UNCRPD's push for individual autonomy and will further enable persons with disabilities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Waymap has strong plans for expansions, with the app being deployed within a major US city later this year. Further growth prospects will look at rail networks across the globe, including within Europe and the United Kingdom.

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# Accessible Medication Plus

## Organisation:

Fundación ONCE – Madrid, Spain

## Year of initiation:

2014

## Funding:

The application is currently funded by the Fundación Vodafone España and Fundación ONCE with the collaboration of the Spanish General Council of Official Colleges of Pharmacists (CGCOF). It was previously also co-financed by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade.

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

## ■ Description of practice:

Accessible Medication Plus is a free application developed for Android and iOS, which presents the information on medicine leaflets in an accessible version to ensure that patients can access and understand the content regardless of their abilities.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

Medication package leaflets are often produced in inaccessible formats. Given the content is printed on paper, persons with visual impairments have few possibilities of accessing the content without requiring the help of another person. A Braille alternative is also largely unfeasible given its printing requires dimensions that are incompatible with the packaging of medicines, making it a costly investment. The design of the brochure can further act as a barrier as they are often printed in a small font size and with a contrast level that may be problematic for people with low vision abilities such as the elderly.

## ■ Solution offered:

The application aims to improve access to information on medicines and to provide greater autonomy and privacy to patients with disabilities and the elderly when managing the use of their medicines. The application makes use of the barcode or Datamatrix found on the medicine packaging. Once the user opens the app and captures the code, the user will receive the information about the medicine in an accessible format on their mobile. In addition, the app incorporates two auxiliary functions: a map that locates pharmacies closest to the user and a section entitled “My Medicines” which stores the key information on the medicines that the individual uses most frequently. The app is further capable of providing warnings about allergies or intolerances, as well as crucial instructions on the administration of medicines to coeliacs, pregnant women, and more depending on the personal profile configured.

During the development of each version of the product, the needs of the users have been considered through both group interviews and pilot tests with persons with varying disabilities. The app is regularly updated with new functionalities and upgrades.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

As of July 2021, the number of downloads on Android is 59,000 and 27,300 on iOS operating systems. The app was also selected in 2019 by the Spanish Network of the United Nations Global Compact as one of the best practices on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, for its positive contribution towards the full achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goal N.10 (reduction of inequalities).

## Contact information:

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# REHAB-LAB "3D printing and assistive devices, from patient to maker"

## Organisation:

Kerpape Rehabilitation Center - Ploemeur, France

## Year of Initiation:

2016

## Funding:

The practice is funded by the French CNSA and Digital Health Europe programmes.

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community

- Adaptation: Ease of design by simply changing parameters on an existing object
- Cloning: Ease of reproduction in reprinting the object.
- Design: Possibility for patient to choose a desirable and convenient colour and shape.
- Cost and time efficient: The materials used and the 3D printing process itself harbour cost and time benefits.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

As of September 2021, the emerging REHAB-LAB community is composed of 31 health and care organisations, who have involved more than 700 users in the process and designed over 1000 assistive devices.

In empowering patients to be involved in designing their assistive devices, they are encouraged to take charge of their own rehabilitation process. This dynamic further promotes an interaction between the patient and the healthcare professional. Whilst patients can focus on the design process and personalisation of the device, the healthcare professional can focus on the technology and specification behind the product. Moreover, with a new collaborative IT platform, individuals will be able to share 3D printable assistive devices, best practices and field experts easily with one another. This will boost knowledge-sharing and further promote innovation within the sector.

The Covid-19 situation in Europe has recently showcased the endless possibilities that come with fabrication laboratories, helping to design and manufacture personal protective equipment. With global supply chains suddenly being cut off, the issue of local manufacturing has become crucial and a pressing matter. REHAB-LAB has been concretely developing a model of distributed production that is both local and 'custom-made' - all thanks to its 3D printers.

## ■ Description of practice:

REHAB-LAB is a fully integrated fabrication laboratory within rehabilitation or medico-social organisations, where citizens/patients with a disability become 'designers' to create their own assistive devices using 3D printing. The REHAB-LAB initiative began in France in 2016 with Kerpape, which is now one of the biggest rehabilitation centres in France. Through the support of the Digital Health Europe programme, REHAB-LAB is now expanding into different countries and has been promoted by the European Commission as an example of scaling up innovation. The new 3D tool promotes an innovative digital fabrication process within healthcare organisations, especially in occupational therapy, further empowering patients to be part of the solution by making their own assistive devices.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

Several European studies highlight a high abandonment rate of assistive devices one year after starting use. 3D printing is a promising solution for health and care systems to tackle this issue, helping to design custom-made assistive devices, and involving users in designing their own assistive devices to improve acceptance and usage rates.

## ■ Solution offered:

Compared to non-digital fabrication processes, REHAB-LAB's 3D printing method comes with several benefits.

- Accessibility: Providing patients with the possibility to design their own assistive devices simply by having access to a computer.

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# Self-advocacy for better inclusion

## Organisation:

Keystone Human Services International Moldova Association – Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

## Year of Initiation:

2014

## Funding:

Donor organisations

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 5 – Equality and non-discrimination, Article 29 – Participation in political and public life

disabilities aged 18-35 from a range of different backgrounds. The empowerment programme includes trainings on equality, self-determination, advocacy, and awareness-raising which are designed to help self-advocates increase their skillset in applying advocacy tools to solve key issues. Advocacy tools developed by the participants cover a wide range of topics including writing petitions, public consultation, and public debates, organising protests and press conferences. As part of their work as self-advocates, these groups aim to raise awareness among the public on the rights of persons with disabilities through mass media, theatre forum performances, flash mobs and awareness lessons in schools.



## Description of practice:

Keystone Moldova promotes inclusive communities through empowering people with disabilities to be self-advocates so that they may fully participate in all aspects of society. As a result, in 2014, with the support of Keystone Moldova, the first self-advocacy group was developed by persons with intellectual disabilities who had recently moved out of a residential institution into the community. Since then, approximately 150 people with disabilities have joined self-advocacy groups across 15 districts in Moldova.

## Problem Targeted:

According to national data, 179,000 persons with disabilities live in the Republic of Moldova, representing 5% of the total population. Despite recent progress by Civil Society Organisations and the Moldovan government, these individuals continue to be underrepresented and discriminated against. Although there are laws which uphold the rights of people with disabilities, they continue to be excluded from decision making processes. Additionally, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities often lack the knowledge and confidence necessary to hold legislators and other officials accountable for decisions and policies that impact their lives.

## Solution offered:

Keystone Moldova has developed an empowerment programme for persons with disabilities aimed at building the capacity of self-advocates to speak up for their rights. The self-advocacy groups are composed of persons with different

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

Since 2016, 150 persons with disabilities have joined self-advocacy groups covering 15 districts nationwide. Many of these advocates have uncovered great benefits from the programme, with 23% of individuals now involved in income-generating activities, 60% benefitting from informal/formal education and 3% regaining their rights to social assistance benefits. These self-advocates have consulted on several policies, including local strategies for social inclusion of people with disabilities, national programmes for social inclusion of people with disabilities and the monitoring of accessibility of public infrastructure in several districts. Furthermore, many of those involved have engaged in European and international events becoming part of the global self-advocacy movement. The knowledge and experience gained at both national and international levels push these self-advocates to continue to act as agents of change.

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# BLuE [Bildung (Education), Life-Competence und (and) Empowerment] =

## Organisation:

University of Education Salzburg Stefan Zweig – Salzburg, Austria

## Year of Initiation:

2017

## Funding:

University Budget

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 24 - states parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education.

## Solution offered:

BLuE is the first programme for students with intellectual disabilities at Austrian universities, developed in cooperation with relevant stakeholders and operating at different levels. At university level, the programme coordinators regularly work with students and staff to develop personalised training sessions, discuss effective learning and teaching methods, and further adapt the BLuE programme according to changing needs. The university has also developed official job descriptions in cooperation with the Austrian Chamber of Commerce; modules within the university programme can be developed around the competencies and skills necessary to attain these jobs.

## Description of practice:

BLuE is an inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE) programme for students with intellectual disabilities based in the University of Education Salzburg Stefan Zweig. It is a fully inclusive certificated programme taking place over a four-year (8 semester) period. The university programme aims to create employment opportunities for those with intellectual disabilities upon completing the course. This has led to the university developing a strong cooperative arrangement with the labour market, including employers and the labour market agency while students take part in the programme.

## Problem Targeted:

Throughout the world, persons with intellectual disabilities are excluded from many areas of life, often segregated in specialised systems, including special schools, sheltered work environments, and congregate living facilities. These arrangements adversely affect their learning opportunities and have a negative impact on their opportunities as adults and their quality of life. Inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE) for individuals with intellectual disabilities, which are programmes housed in traditional colleges and universities, is a relatively new practice that holds much promise for improved adult outcomes. However, there are currently relatively few IPSE programmes for young adults with intellectual disabilities in Europe.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

The university aims to disseminate their experiences at a national level, looking to encourage stakeholders from neighbouring Austrian universities to implement similar programmes. In October 2022, the university will organise a conference on this topic in Salzburg, where speakers from both national and international universities will discuss the importance of developing IPSE-programmes both in Austria and across Europe.

Through the BLuE programme, the university has founded the European network joinIN alongside other European institutions. The University of Education Salzburg Stefan Zweig's goal is to reproduce programmes like BLuE on a national level, increasing the access of persons with intellectual disabilities towards higher-level education. This requires not only the development of fully inclusive programmes, but the development of instructions for IPSE staff and student volunteers to improve their knowledge on promoting inclusion and self-determination in school, as well as the creation and dissemination of quality indicators for IPSE programmes.

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# The Israeli National Leadership Center of People with Disabilities

## Organisation:

Beit Issie Shapiro - Ra'anana, Israel

## Year of initiation:

2017

## Funding:

Crowdfunding, Philanthropic funding from foundations

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 29 – Participation in political and public life.

## Description of practice:

The National Leadership Center of People with Disabilities seeks to empower people with disabilities and provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills for self-advocacy and active leadership. Actors involved learn how to effectively exercise their natural rights through Israeli and international legislation, participate in making decisions pertaining to their lives, advance policy issues that require government attention and consequently, improve their quality of life.

## Problem Targeted:

In Israel, many within the public and numerous service providers perceive people with disabilities as dependent and helpless. Their abilities to contribute to and enrich society are largely ignored and as a result they lack opportunities to experience leadership roles, to take part in influential circles, and to participate in decision-making processes. There is also a shortage of active leadership to drive significant social change amongst the younger generation of people with disabilities, in parent groups of children with disabilities, and amongst other unrepresented groups.

## Solution offered:

The mission of the National Leadership Center is to bring to life the UNCRPD's underlying principle of "nothing about us without us", by empowering persons with disabilities to make their voices heard, ensuring their calls are no longer excluded from national policy issues. The Center consists of 7 leadership groups of people with all types of disabilities across all population groups and ages. A facilitator of each group ensures that members receive ongoing training and guidance on the necessary skills to achieve their objectives more effectively. Ultimately, the National Leadership Center hopes to integrate its members into key positions in society, therefore acting as an inspiration for more people with disabilities to speak up.

## Impact and Sustainability of practice:

The Leadership Center's groups focus their efforts on influencing policy on a national level, in various areas of society relating to people with disabilities. Today, through the work of the Self-Advocacy Groups, people with disabilities are seen and heard. They are now being considered as legitimate partners in the discourse amongst policymakers. Both local and national government request their input and participation in legislative processes which has both directly impacted thousands of people with disabilities and helped facilitate a change in attitude towards people with disabilities. Their activities have led to exciting and important breakthroughs, including an amendment to the Legal Capacity and Guardianship Law passed by the Israeli Parliament's Ministerial Legislative Committee. The Leadership Center team is in the process of compiling the Center's work model and developing an online toolbox, which will be disseminated among activists and professionals around the world.

## Contact information:

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# Nahdine

## Organisation:

Dominiek Savio vzw - Gits, Belgium

## Year of initiation:

2020

## Funding:

Programme is funded by the King Baudouin Foundation and Dr. Daniël De Coninck Fund

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community

## ■ Description of practice:

Dominiek Savio's project aims to improve the quality of life and participation of people with acquired brain injuries living at home through an innovative collaboration between the patient, the caregiver, carer, and an occupational therapist. In many cases, the patient living at home wishes to resume their favourite activities and hobbies, but faces obstacles given their limited abilities because of their injury. Through a collaborative approach including all parties, the project aims to investigate:

- (1) Which activities the patient wants to perform again.
- (2) What their capabilities are.
- (3) How they can be trained to be able to perform their chosen activity once more.
- (4) How a strong cooperation can be established between the caregiver and the carer.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

Statistics show that within Flanders, there are approximately 50,000 new patients annually with an acquired brain injury, out of which 15,000 develop considerable disabilities because of the injury. These at-home patients often feel restricted by their own self, resulting in a lack of motivation, lowered self-esteem, and increased fatigue. Additionally, caregivers often do not have the expertise and training necessary to better integrate the client in daily activities. The goal is therefore to set realistic goals for the patient which will ultimately help them feel more competent in taking back control of their life.

## ■ Solution offered:

The service operates as a collaboration between Dominiek Savio and Familiehulp, an organisation providing support and care at home. Dominiek Savio trains carers from Familiehulp to conduct an Occupational Self-Assessment (OSA) which maps the expectations of the client. An occupational therapist is then involved to map the strengths and weaknesses of the client using the Assessment of Motor and Process Skills instrument. Based upon the test results, a training programme over the course of 20 weeks is developed, in which the patient re-learns the self-chosen activity. These sessions are carried out by an occupational therapist and carer.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

In the medium/long term, clients will require less specialised care and enjoy a better quality of life. The programme currently reaches 40 patients, all have improved support allowing them to live longer at home.

Carers are now better supported and trained to communicate with patients, acquiring new skills on how to better evaluate the needs of the client. Currently, there is no fee for clients, however, in the future, clients and caregivers can pay for this service with their own resources or through financial intervention from the government.

The practice also provides opportunities for organisations to get to know each other. The project builds a special collaboration between 'first line' care (regular service – directly accessible) and 'second line' care (specialised in working with people with a disability – not directly accessible). This unique collaboration between the 'first line' and the 'second line' is relevant in the whole of Flanders, but also outside of the region/ country. Disability-specific knowledge from the point of view of an occupational therapist can enrich family care organisations all over the world and enhance the participation of people with an acquired brain injury in society.

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# JAMBA - Career For All

## Organisation:

Social Future Foundation - Bulgaria, Austria and Hungary

## Year of initiation:

2017

## Funding:

Key revenue streams come from the companies involved; this includes recruitment commissions, membership subscriptions to the talent pool and job board, corporate trainings, diversity, and inclusion workshops

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 27 – Work and Employment

opportunity to study online and acquire new qualifications, even if the individual is in a remote area. JAMBA opened the first accessible career hub in Bulgaria which allows persons with disabilities to develop further skills and boost their social inclusion.

JAMBA proactively seeks connections with willing employers, assisting these companies with recruitment, and preparing them to effectively integrate persons with disabilities into their teams. Companies are offered diversity and inclusion trainings, and are advised on relevant legal frameworks, including tax and other incentives, for employing people with disabilities. JAMBA organises awareness-raising campaigns with the participation of persons with disabilities to help change the general public's attitude, so far establishing a wide reach of over 2 million individuals.

## ■ Description of practice:

The “JAMBA Career for All” initiative supports job seekers with disabilities to attain key competencies through a wide range of training programmes which include the development of soft skills, English classes and trainings on ICT, AI and programming tools.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

According to the National Statistical Institute, 800,000 persons with disabilities live in Bulgaria. 80% of these individuals are of working age and represent a largely untapped resource of human capital, yet only 12% are employed. Persons with disabilities have enormous potential but lack equal access to inclusive and quality education given that the educational infrastructure and learning materials are currently inaccessible. Further, the political, legal & employment systems in Bulgaria contribute to the problem given the multitude of complex and unclear regulations related to the employment of talents with disabilities.

## ■ Solution offered:

JAMBA aims to include persons with disabilities in the open labour market by ensuring a provision of equal access to professional training programmes tailored to the user's needs, extending opportunities for professional experience, and establishing inclusive workplaces in the open labour market. Active investments are made in capacity building through in-person trainings and the creation of an accessible e-learning platform. This platform provides anyone with the

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

Since the establishment of the project, JAMBA has managed to attract more than 2500 candidates to their talent pool, implement multidisciplinary trainings for more than 600 candidates and assist in the recruitment of 350 Bulgarians with over 60 partnering organisations. By increasing the skill set of persons with disabilities, they are given a fair chance for a professional start and career development and can better integrate into society. With regards to the corporate sector, JAMBA aims to change the mindset of corporations, encouraging them to push for more inclusion in the workplace and start actively looking for and hiring long-term employees with disabilities.

The project has recently expanded to Hungary and Austria and is looking to expand in further areas of Europe. To ensure successful growth, trainings and a transfer of know-how, and access to the online infrastructure will provide strong support to future franchise partners.

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Joana Koleva, Co-founder and Chair: [joana@jamba.bg](mailto:joana@jamba.bg)

# The Integrative Unit Model (IUM)

## Organisation:

Shekulo Tov Group - Lod, Israel

## Year of initiation:

2014

## Funding:

Shekulo Tov Group is funded 25% through its business operations and 75% as a service provider, mainly for several Israeli Ministries.

## Link to UNCRPD:

Article 27 - Work and Employment

## ■ Solution offered:

With over 120 business training units located in the heart of communities nationwide, the IUM creates thousands of daily social interactions, removing barriers between people with and without disabilities. The IUM's approach is known as 'Train & Place' - bridging the gap between sheltered and supported employment by creating a unique support system and a 'safety net' for service users, who can return to their unit and receive the support needed even after being placed in the open labour market. The IUM even encourages service users to open their own businesses through training in business units. The training and confidence built through the IUM and supported employment of staff allows employers to understand the actual value of people with disabilities.

## ■ Description of practice:

The Integrative Unit Model (IUM) aims to help people with severe psycho-social disabilities and other disabilities and vocational barriers realise their potential and achieve their goals to join the open labour market. It promotes the transition from vocational training into the open labour market through mixed sheltered and supported employment practices. Vocational training assists service users to gain experience, learn skills, develop professional tools, and readjust to market demands. Furthermore, Shekulo Tov developed and implemented MyWay, a digital rehabilitation platform and app, encouraging professional teams and service users to share information about each service user's recovery plan, personal advancements, and goals during the recovery process. MyWay further enables service users to have ownership over their recovery plan and be proactive in its implementation.

## ■ Problem Targeted:

Vocational rehabilitation providers have struggled to further a substantial movement of service users from sheltered services into the open labour market. The isolated integration of service users continues to occur due to training centres being established far from city centres and doesn't include constant interactions with the community. Structural and conceptual divisions between sheltered and supported employment result in the professional staff of both methods focusing on their specific systems and legal responsibilities instead of on the rehabilitation itself. Moreover, employers have been forced to hire and protect people with psycho-social disabilities rather than consider their potential impact as economically beneficial.

## ■ Impact and Sustainability of practice:

Today, out of 3800 service users, 1140 work with a contract in over 500 open labour market employers IUM works with. Overall, the IUM successfully transitioned thousands of service users into the open labour market over the years. It also led to a reduction in time for service users' preparative vocational training for open labour market placement from 4 years to 14 months. In addition, 60% of service users in the open labour market succeeded in maintaining their job for more than a year, with more than 97% earning minimum wage. Continued adjustments are undertaken to offer the IUM to new populations (in and out of Israel) and create new technological tools and improvements to existing working models.

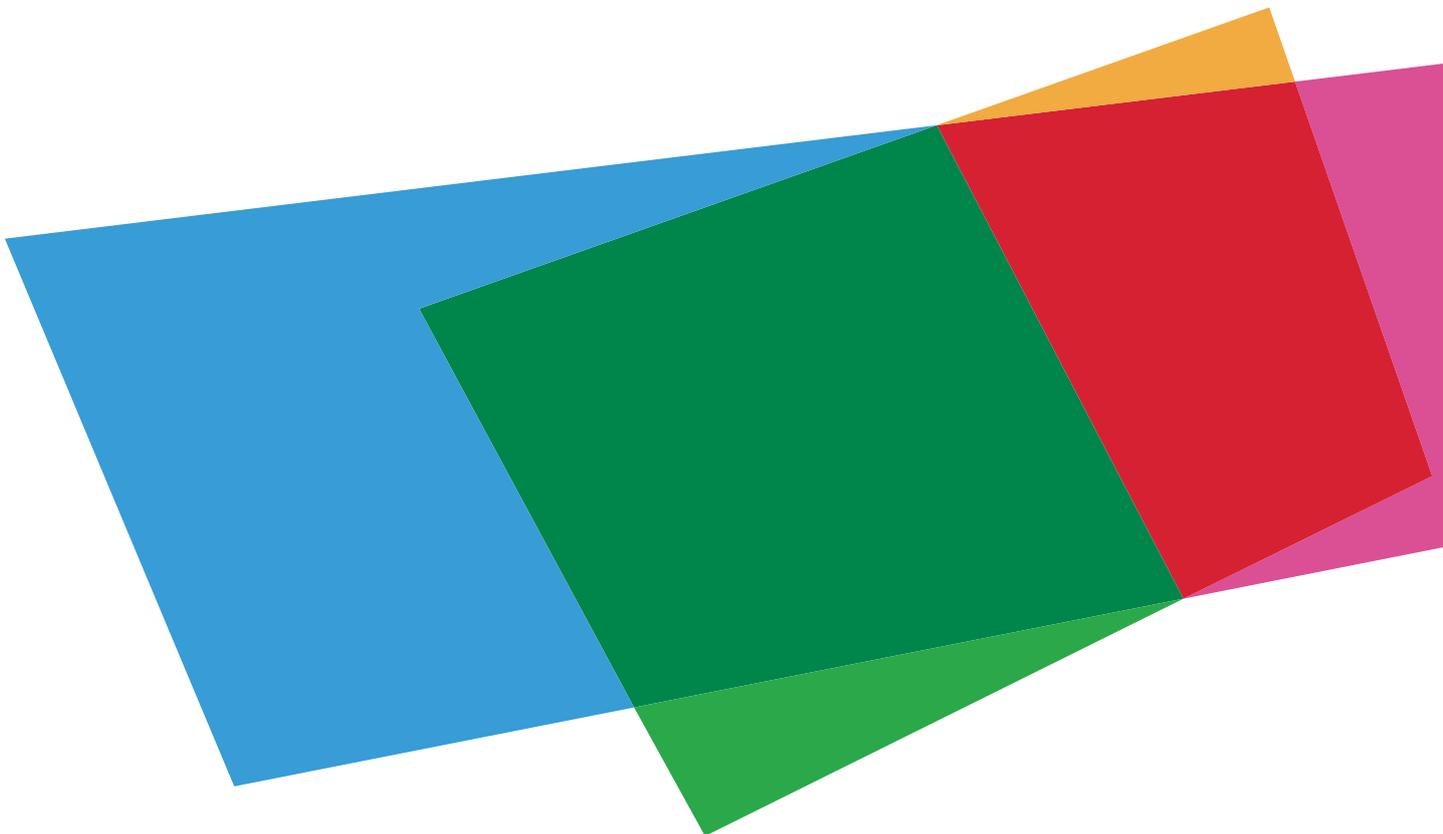
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## **EASPD Innovation Awards**

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