

HiLives – networking for full participation, inclusion and independent lives in Higher Education

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FIGURE 1

The HiLives logo, first creation within HiLives Project, developed by a team composed by students of the Design Course of the University of Aveiro, and two students with IDD.

FIGURE 2

Inclusive rhetoric versus reality (O'Brien et al., 2019).

HiLives Project [ERASMUS+, 2019-1-PT01-KA203-061312] aimed at creating a new scenario in the field of Higher Education (HE) and transition to Employment, creating opportunities for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) to participate, belong and learn in HE, within an inclusive and collaborative model.

The consortium, involving 4 universities and 4 ONGs in Portugal, Spain, Belgium and Iceland, focused in developing 3 outputs:

- A transnational/European framework for the development of an inclusive, flexible and student-centered HE curriculum, accessible to adults with IDD, based in: (i) the normative and political framework for inclusion in HE and Employment; (ii) the stakeholders' point of view [people with IDD, families, HEIs, and employers]; and (iii) the evidence-based/international literature.
- A prototype of a digital tool to connect and network opportunities, tackling gaps and mismatches between the expectations, skills and needs of young adults

with IDD, and both the HE offer and the employment opportunities. Departing from a benchmarking exercise, the team designed and developed the model, implemented and validated it (convoking the perspectives of people with IDD, HEI and Companies, in the 4 countries of the consortium).

- A Transnational/European good practices guide for HEIs, Secondary Schools, and Employers, aiming at helping adults with IDD to access HE and to start an independent life. Focusing on 11 domains, the team analyzed weaknesses and threats, strengths and opportunities to its implementation, with recommendations for each domain. The guide includes a detailed presentation of the programs developed by the 4 *HiLives* universities, and a brief review of other programs identified as examples of good practices.

Intertwined with HiLives, the innovative *Programa Individual de Estudos Multidisciplinares* opened inclusive Portuguese HE to students with IDD at UA, October 2021. The 2nd edition will start at September 2023.

Element	Operationalizing an "Inclusive Human Right"	Keeping people in "Their Right Place"
Model	Full inclusion	Locational inclusion on the university campus
Funding	Guaranteed and sustained government funding to support inclusive initiatives	One off funding grants from government, philanthropies or corporates
Admission policy	Open to enrolling students with intellectual disability (ID) into courses without them having to have university entrance exam scores or being a mature aged student	Auditing courses only owing to lack of entry grades; visitor/affiliate status arising from participating in a special program
Accreditation rules and regulations	University supports development of new course that includes students with ID into life of university	Students attend classes, but do not receive written university recognition of competencies
Support services	All university support services, inclusive of medical counselling, disability tutoring services	Official support only available if the student is officially enrolled
Inclusive pedagogy	Academics design their courses and instruction according to the principles of Universal Design for Learning to meet the diverse needs of all learners	Academics design their courses and instruction to meet the needs of the "average" student.
Graduation policy	Graduate from the university with full recognition of course completed on official transcripts	Presentation/internal award evenings with certificate of Attendance only
Disability policy	Inclusion of people with ID strategically included in the policy and practice of the university	People with intellectual disability not included as students within the university's rules and regulations

Source: O'Brien, P., Bonati, M., Gadow, F., Slee, R. (2019). Moving from Rhetoric to Reality: Inclusive Tertiary Education for Adults with Intellectual Disability. In Patricia O'Brien, Michelle L. Bonati, Friederike Gadow, Roger Slee (Eds.), *People with Intellectual Disability Experiencing University Life: Theoretical Underpinnings, Evidence and Lived Experience*, (pp. 277-287). Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV.

