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Disability, a multiple impact reality

Focus Group - Llavaneres

There is no sector of the scenario where disability does not have a direct impact which must be managed in very diverse ways

Welcome and Presentation

The participants arrived and were introduced to each other highlighting the sector of activity each is in and the involvement that each has in the care and support of persons with disabilities.

The situation for the disabled community was highlighted in order to focus on the importance that the development of this population has for the sustainability of the social, political and economic environment.

The group was made up of university professor, entrepreneur, politician, nurse, trainer and mother of a disabled child

The session was a contextual analysis of the impact of disabled persons in the different areas of the scenario and the social skills and competences that must be developed to manage this diversity . The objective was to go through all the skills in order to have a global vision of the skills to evaluate so that the participant could better give a preference to their development by professionals that care for disabled persons.

Later the participants were in a position to give their opinion, comments and suggestions, to analyse the proposed skills and technical competence to be developed as well as suggest others . And even more, consider what each could do to improve the present social and professional gaps in the discrimination that persons with disabilities suffer. As well as the impact in all the agents involved.



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Evaluation of Technical Competences and Social Skills by focus group participants.

In general the participants found difficult to grade the importance of the skills brought up by the project. Therefore the majority gave a high rating to all the skills equally.

Getting to know the disabled persons through evaluating their profiles was particularly rated highly to give support based on the knowledge of individual education objectives

Some skills were found difficult to train in. vocation was a key trait of the profile that persons that care and support disabled persons must have.

The equal importance of all the skills is shared by the majority of the participants. The mother of the disabled child in the group stated that

“ if the professionals that care for disabled persons had all these skills the situation would be perfect”

Another key issue deeply shared is that the base of all the present attitude toward disability is the family. The social culture of the family and the stereotype of normal and disabled that is transmitted. The family includes people like them and discriminates persons with diverse profiles, particularly the behavior related to persons with disabilities. The family culture also determines the acceptance or not of persons of other races, nationalities, gender and even age. And this stereotype acquired in early age is difficult to manage as the person matures and has to take its own stand towards diversities.

The mother of the disabled child states that

“it would be perfect if the professionals that care for her have the competences and skills brought up in the focus groups. But admitted that she will keep overprotecting her daughter because she has never considered that she could have any type of profession or have the capability of developing it.



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Technical competences

Participants of the focus group also agreed in that the 4 technical competencies singled out by the questionnaire were essentially- and not simply important - for a professional caring for disabled persons must have and acquire.

Professional that care for persons with disabilities must carry out their work as a vocation and not simply as a profession.

“Do not equate professionals personal development with acquiring competences. It is critical to understand that the issue is that of improving personal development and generosity as a personal achievement, and not simply as a competence that has to be acquired to give quality care to persons with disabilities” The principle being that the professionals that care for disabled persons, should have a high level of personal empathy, knowledge, competence and skills as core profile of their personally and authentic professional way of doing things. It does not deal exclusively with acquiring knowledge , competences and skills.”

The participants agree in that the competences and skills brought up in the focus group should be acquired by the entire population and not refer only by the professionals that care for persons with limitations and disabilities. Insist that it is a critical need that the entire population learns to acquire an inclusive culture. And consider totally natural, that persons with physical or mental limitations can develop a professional life. And that they can be self dependant.

As far as the order in acquiring these competence and skills is concerned; having the attitude to consider mandatory to help develop towards a professional life, is a priority. Then of course, accompanying them is their insertion process is absolutely necessary to give quality care of the disabled community. This quality holistic care not only helps the disabled population, but it also helps their family as society in general , given the dimension of this community.



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General comments and contribution on the part of the focus group participants

Again it is important to emphasize that the participants' opinion is that all the subjects brought up in the focus group to be evaluated are all of basic importance for any professional that cares for disabled persons must equally have.

Professionals that care for persons with disabilities must carry out their work as a vocation and not simply as a profession. With the contextual understanding of the social, political and economic impact that this population has in the country and European scenario. A scenario with a dramatic generational curve, Europe cannot afford not leveraging the capabilities and contributions of 13% of its population. And Spain cannot afford disregarding 14.5% of its population.

Education is a core issue to be addressed urgently in order to achieve total inclusion of the disabled community into social and professional life in the country. When addressing this issue there is a classification that should be considered.

Disabled (discapacitado) Person that due to mental or physical health problems has irreversible limitations to carry out a holistic life.

Incapable (incapacitado) Person that is limited in their ability to carry on an average life status for lack of education, training, ambition or interest.

Discapable (minusvalido) Person that has limited capacity .
Generally applied to limited mobility



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The project addresses the care that must be given to persons with disabilities or reduced abilities or motilities, not to persons who having the potential capacity to carry out in life, do not advance for lack of interest, personal effort or negative culture.

Education, as the participants emphasis, is set by the family environment. Accepting and including disabilities is learned early in life as the family sets stereotype of what is right or wrong in their environment . therefore adult education is critically needed. School education is basic. As in school children and later students of upper grades must learn not only geography and mathematics, but more important, to communicate and interact with classmates of all different profiles. Bulling is a disease of this era in the education system. Where discrimination against disabled classmate is the cause of lack of progress of members of this community. Therefore teachers and professors must play a critical role in educating the art of inclusion of all profiles, particularly the less favored which are the children with disabilities.

The university professor participant became very aware of this problem during the focus group discussion. He became highly aware of the fact the in his university, there are no students with disability. Given the statistics of the dimension of the community of persons with disabilities, it is worth further analysis to identify the factors that stop members of this profile to access to university levels. This being an issue that the university will have to address.

He also created a parallel analysis of the causes of women discrimination at university level. He started relating it to those of disabled students in upper grade studies. Women are generally reluctant to advance is scientific carriers as they feel that they have no opportunity to advance once they graduate because of the gender barrier. He commits to analyse of issue of disabled students inclusion at university level from now on.



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Particularly search to identify the causes of the discriminating conduct of classmates, and the role professors must perform in order to achieve full inclusion and leverage the contribution that disabled student can surely offer is their talent is recognized and promoted.

Learning to value what persons with disability can offer is of extreme importance. The example of Steven Hopkins was bought up. The most brilliant brain in the world capable of understanding and explaining to the rest of humanity the genesis the universe. Trapped in the most disabled body. Persons with autisms who can be extraordinary in mathematics. Mobility disabled professional in information technology. The most brilliant artists in history have been disabled: Leonardo da Vinci, Beethoven, Mozart, Munch, Van Gogh, Goya, Cervantes..... Examples that can be used by professionals to promote a professional life to these persons. The importance of early diagnosis of potential talents in order to orient the training of the person with disability towards learning to develop that activity and develop it as a profession as part of their life.

People tend to have a distorted vision when looking at a person with disability. Only look at the difference and not look at their capabilities and the contribution that the person can make to the environment. Important to acquire the capacity to be spontaneous . At the same time disregard stereotypes and discrimination based on social and cultural heritage

“ I have rated 5 all the technical competencies as well as the need to acquire them because in my opinion they are equally important and necessary for the professionals to have in order to give quality care to disabled persons. I also believe that it is important that they are aware of the fact that some times situations can get complicated, but precisely then it is vital to keep on advancing to achieve the desired objectives.”