



IN-CUBA

News Bulletin

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The core of the project is the development of an incubation methodology for projects and ideas for people with intellectual disability ...

IN-CUBA Final results: conclusion of an adventure for a new beginning

The IN-CUBA project began with the ambition of a very committed partnership to apply co-production to the elaboration of new tools for professionals aimed at supporting the desire of people with intellectual disability to undertake a path towards professional independence. After three years and several hours of co-productive focus groups, it is possible to say that the results of this action are extremely positive and went beyond what was initially foreseen in the project description, witnessing a process of personal and professional growth for the persons involved, and in particular for beneficiaries and service providers.

The IN-CUBA Partnership benefitted from previous successful collaboration that made co-production part of its backbone. Co-production represents a unique opportunity to re-think the partnership between the state and the citizen through the redefinition of the role of service users, families, professionals and local community making them equal partners and engines of change within the production and delivery of social services. However, the development of the action wasn't just about co-production, but also about sharing dreams and giving shape to ideas. Undertaking a project is a vital moment for people, and this is particularly true for people with intellectual disability. Therefore, being able to bridge the gap between dreams and ambitions, and concrete goals and reality, it is a major achievement both for

professionals and for persons with intellectual disability.

Entrepreneurship can provide a concrete solution to the challenges that people with intellectual disability face in the access to the labour market, at the same time as favouring social inclusion. Persons with intellectual disability might be able and willing to take up self-employment or business ownership as a paid work option, however, in a medium/long-term perspective this can be hardly sustainable without an appropriate support. We have seen that this support is generally missing but not the interest in it, as the exchanges with business incubators and other experts in the field have proven.

At EU level unemployment for people with disabilities is higher than for the rest of the populations. There is therefore an interest in all initiatives that can create good working conditions. However, the risk of losing benefit is a huge barrier for all people with disability who want to enter the labour market. According to a study run by the European Disability Forum¹, the Countries with higher employment rates for people with disability are those with a flexible social system that allows persons to keep some of the support they need while they start working. Social protection benefits are extremely important to cover those costs, and starting a working activity (either as employee or

as an independent worker) may put this at risk. Therefore, a good starting point to foster entrepreneurship for people with disability would be to recognise social protection benefits at least in the first years of activity, when an enterprise starts up.

During the IN-CUBA journey it was made clear that entrepreneurship can be considered a gateway to the labour market for people with intellectual disability. However, there are barriers to break. Even if it does not seem an obstacle per se, legislation is not always clear and it does not directly favour entrepreneurship for people with intellectual disability. It is often the prejudice and the lack of confidence that block any initiative. The IN-CUBA Project was appropriately directed in trying to fill the gap between intellectual disability and entrepreneurship and maybe develop the necessary impetus to begin breaking certain barriers. Perhaps it is also time to challenge the use of the term “service user” with a labelling that better reflects equality, reciprocity and acknowledgment of a rebalancing of traditional relationships.

The experience developed during ENABLE and IN-CUBA allowed the partnership to make the point on what should be done at European, National and local level. In particular:

- Promote co-production as a way to foster equal opportunities and social inclusion for disadvantaged groups;
- Sustain co-production as a way to favour self-determination and active participation

¹ European Human Rights Report 2020: Poverty and Social Exclusion
<https://www.edf-feqh.org/publications/european-human-rights-report/>

of persons with intellectual disabilities and in general of all disadvantaged groups;

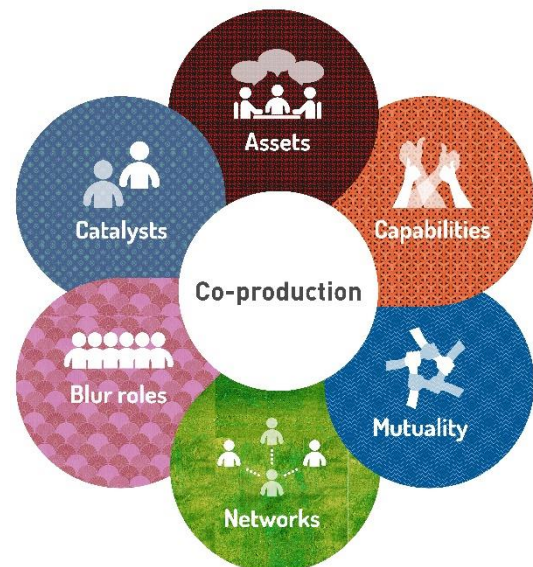
- Consider entrepreneurship as a real possibility for people with intellectual disability;
- Introduce flexibility into the social supporting system to allow persons with disability to keep some of the support they need while they start working;

Through the research carried out by the partnership and the exchanges with experts, it emerged that a helping hand towards entrepreneurship for people with intellectual disability can come from the Social Economy, whose enterprises play an important role in the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups and whose legal forms may prove to be friendlier models. Social economy enterprises combine societal goals with an entrepreneurial spirit, and focus on achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives. Furthermore, social enterprises have great achievements in social insertion of disadvantaged groups.

The current moment is also particularly interesting also because social inclusion has come back to the EU priorities by the adoption of the new Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030². It is therefore important to take advantage of this moment to build policies that allow people to access the

labour market either as employees or as independent workers and that introduce mechanisms to sustain the costs of a worker with disability. The new European Disability Strategy is very ambitious and aims at fully implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and equal participation in all areas of life. The Strategy is part of a broader range of initiatives that also tackle employment and it goes together with EU Pillar of Social Rights, which pushes for a more inclusive society and a fair labour market. The European ground is therefore ready to welcome new seeds to foster social inclusion and professional independence of persons with intellectual disability.

The project is heading toward its natural end but, after the breakthrough generated by INCUBA, for its Partnership this is just the beginning of a new era!



IN-CUBA Project Partnership



APEMH Foundation (LU) is the project coordinator. It is APEMH mission to defend rights and interests of people with intellectual disabilities and manage a series of facilities and services that can meet users' diverse needs, through an inclusive approach that encourages full participation and self-determination. APEMH has a training unit (UFEP) with an extensive expertise in developing inclusive learning programs, and an easy to read accessibility of information department that is leader in Luxembourg and in Europe. www.apemh.lu



AMPANS (ES) mission is to improve the quality of life of people with intellectual disability, creating and managing centres, services and supporting the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. It has a strong commitment to serve people with disabilities, AMPANS provides services to over 1,200 people each year. www.ampans.cat



CADIAI (IT) is a social cooperative that for 40 years has been providing the community with the best possible care services and assistance to people with disabilities, both in terms of promoting the well-being as enhancement of the various paths of empowerment and independence promoting. Cadiai, has always tried to create a synergy with families and with the government to assess the best solutions and the most valued answers to the emerging needs.



CREA (IT) is the research centre of San Sebastiano Onlus foundation. It provides resources to improve the health of adult people with intellectual disability. The principal outcome measure is Quality of Life, as individual optimization of the relation between attribution of importance and perception of satisfaction in several areas of life, in a lifelong perspective. www.crea-sansebastiano.org



De Lork (BE) has long lasting demonstrated experience on enabling users to actively participate in the decision making of the organization and leading research in participative methodologies. www.delork.be



FENACERCI is the National Federation of Cooperatives and Social Solidarity is 52 associated members located throughout the country, providing support and services to about 25,000 people with intellectual disabilities and their families, with close to 6000 professionals. FENACERCI advocates for a society characterised by equal opportunities for all. www.fenacerci.pt



Open Group (IT) has a long experience in managing semi residential, social rehabilitation and transition to employment services for people with disabilities. OpenGroup is also specialized in art and web design services involving people with disability. www.opengroup.eu



ARFIE is an EU Umbrella organization with more than 25 years of close collaboration between service providers and training and research centres in the disability field in EU. ARFIE has Members in several EU countries and will lead the Work package "Dissemination and Exploitation of Results" due to his proven expertise in this field as also notable outreach. www.arfie.info



For more information about the project



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co-production