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**TRANSITION TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN THE CANARY ISLANDS:
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

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Abstract. One of the challenges of modern societies is the access to ordinary employment of people with intellectual disabilities. In this article: 1) We will present the existing measures in the Canary Islands regarding educational attention to students with intellectual disabilities. 2) We will analyze the resources available and the processes of transit to employment from the education system and from the entities linked to employment. 3) We will examine the role of special employment centers and occupational centers. 4) We will analyze the characteristics of the Supported Employment model for access to ordinary employment of people with significant disabilities. This model, created in the United States in the 70s, has demonstrated its effectiveness for the labor inclusion of people with significant disabilities. 5) We will describe the situation of the Employment with Support model in the Canary Islands, highlighting some good practice projects. The employment of people with intellectual disabilities in the Canary Islands remains an anecdotal fact, despite the available resources and the trajectory of different specialized entities. It is necessary to document experiences, encourage research, take care of the process of transition to adult life, match economic investment in employability resources of a protected nature with those of ordinary character. Finally, it is necessary to inform and raise awareness about the ability people with disabilities to contribute to the creation of more profitable and sustainable companies.

Keywords: Intellectual disability, educational attention, access to employment, supported employment.

TRANSICIÓN AL EMPLEO DE PERSONAS CON DISCAPACIDAD INTELLECTUAL EN CANARIAS: EL EMPLEO CON APOYO

Resumen. Uno de los desafíos de las sociedades modernas es el acceso al empleo ordinario de las personas con discapacidad intelectual. En este artículo: 1) Abordaremos las medidas existentes en Canarias en materia de atención educativa a los alumnos con discapacidad intelectual. 2) Analizaremos los recursos disponibles y los procesos de tránsito al empleo desde el sistema educativo y desde las entidades vinculadas a empleo. 3) Examinaremos el papel de los centros especiales de empleo y los centros ocupacionales, destacando los aspectos que allanan el camino hacia el empleo ordinario. 4) Analizaremos las características del modelo de Empleo con Apoyo para el acceso al empleo ordinario de personas con discapacidades significativas; este modelo, surgido en Estados Unidos en la década de los 70, ha demostrado su eficacia para la inclusión laboral de personas con discapacidades significativas. 5) Describiremos la situación del modelo de Empleo con Apoyo en Canarias, destacando algunos proyectos de buenas prácticas. El empleo de las personas con discapacidad intelectual en Canarias continúa siendo un hecho anecdótico a pesar de los recursos disponibles y de la trayectoria de distintas entidades especializadas. Es necesario documentar experiencias, fomentar la investigación, cuidar el proceso de tránsito a la vida adulta, igualar la inversión económica en los recursos de empleabilidad de carácter protegido con los de carácter ordinario. Finalmente, es necesario informar y crear conciencia sobre la capacidad de las personas con discapacidad para contribuir a la creación de empresas más rentables y sostenibles.

Palabras clave: Discapacidad intelectual, atención educativa, acceso al empleo, empleo con apoyo.

Introduction

One of the great political challenges of welfare states is access to employment and adult life for people with intellectual disabilities; this challenge must be faced with original solutions and bearing in mind the characteristics of the group that is going to be integrated into society, which is often subject to social exclusion (Santana, 2013; 2015; Santana, Feliciano y Jiménez, 2016; Santana, González y Feliciano, 2016; Bello, Santana y Feliciano, 2020; Garcés, Santana y Feliciano, 2020). In the case of young people with intellectual disabilities, the challenge is particularly significant since it involves overcoming stereotypes and preconceived ideas regarding their abilities. It also requires innovative and active work methodologies (Santana y del Castillo, 2016); using those methodologies will allow the professionals who work with this group to be able to attend to diversity and give an educational response adjusted to their needs.

Despite the guidelines imposed on equality of opportunity and non-discrimination at the national and international levels, access to employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities is a low-profile reality that reaches only a few. However, in practice, there is a range of opportunities to make it happen.

The employment of people with intellectual disabilities in the Canary Islands is seen and felt differently by the parties involved. The Canary Archipelago consists of eight islands: Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, La Graciosa, Gran Canaria, Tenerife, La Palma, La Gomera, and El Hierro. They constitute the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands within the Spanish State.

The entities involved in our region in labor inclusion of people with disabilities perceive it as a great challenge for which means and knowledge are needed; families see it as an unattainable dream since there is a lack of material and human resources that can meet their demands for specific programs to improve the quality of life of their family member with a disability; most employers conceive it as a threat rather than as an opportunity to discover different talents and skills that add value to their companies; society looks at it with tenderness and as something merely anecdotal; politicians seem to pay more attention to the voices that demand places in care centers and the promotion of protected environments, pacing programs that promote inclusion in the community in another order of priorities; finally, it is difficult to know what people with intellectual disabilities think since it is not usual to ask for their opinion. This reality can be extended to many other severe disabilities included within the term “functional diversity”, such as autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, brain damage, etc. These circumstances encourage many discussions that promote decision making in the field of social and labor inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

This paper describes the existing milestones in the Canary Islands regarding the transition to the employment of people with intellectual disabilities, starting from the educational system, and analyzing the transition opportunities offered by institutions with competencies in the field of employment, as well as from the assistance resources. This paper also briefly reviews the current situation of supported employment programs focusing on the labor market inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

Educational attention to diversity in the Canary Islands: Current situation

According to recent research, the European Agency for Special Needs with Inclusive Education (2018) shows that:

- Inclusive education is one of the factors that increase the employment of people with disabilities.
- The nature of the curriculum may increase or limit employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- High-quality transition programs in secondary education can increase the likelihood that people with disabilities will be hired.
- Educational inclusion can influence the type of employment that is achieved (supported employment, open employment, and self-employment)

Canarian legislation on education recognizes the right of all persons to an education on equal terms, which promotes the success and excellence of all students in a common learning environment where they live together in diversity. Of course, the Canarian legislation on diversity is in line with national and international legislation on this subject (LOMCE, European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

The Canarian Education Law 6/2014 of 25 July establishes that the guiding principles of the Canarian educational system are: pedagogical attention to each student, equal opportunities, social participation, and efficiency in all schools to meet the educational needs of the students and to achieve the best learning results. Likewise, Article 4 states that “the education system of the Canary Islands will be configured as an inclusive system, aimed at guaranteeing each person the appropriate attention to reach the maximum level of his or her abilities and competences”. This Law defines attention to diversity as “the set of educational actions aimed at promoting the educational progress of students, taking into account their different abilities, rhythms and style of learning,

motivations, and interests, as well as their social, economic, cultural, linguistic and health situations.”

Article 4 of Decree 25/2018 of February 26, which regulates attention to diversity in the area of non-university education in the autonomous community of the Canary Islands, establishes the following as measures to address diversity: (a) Ordinary measures to promote the development of skills corresponding to the objectives of each stage, through modifications in the educational context. b) Extraordinary measures referring to adaptations in the curriculum. c) When the previous measures are not considered sufficient, exceptional measures may be established which may include formula of mixed schoolings, such as schooling in ordinary centers of special educational attention, in enclave classrooms, or any other proposed program. Schooling in special education centers shall be carried out when there are reasons that justify the impossibility of schooling in ordinary centers.

Transition to the employment of students with disabilities

Enclave classrooms are schooling units located in ordinary educational centers. They meet the special educational needs of students who require adaptations. There are enclave classrooms in the nursery and primary schools, where students are between 3 and 14 years old, as well as in secondary schools, with students between 14 and 21.

The adapted curricular specifications (Order of February 10, 2016) meet the different educational needs of students in the enclave classroom and special education centers. These curricular specifications provide guidance and support to professionals who must, in turn, carry out the necessary adaptations to ensure that the subjects included in the specifications are suited to the characteristics and needs of the students.

The Curriculum Specification for the Transition to Adult Life is the one proposed for the students of enclave classrooms that are in secondary schools and special education centers. It is arranged and organized around four spheres: Personal autonomy, social autonomy, communication and representation, and work environment. The latter aims to prepare students for their future incorporation into the world of work, contributing to their professional training and discovering job possibilities and expectations following the personal and professional profile of the students.

Royal Decree 127/2014 of February 28, which regulates specific aspects of basic vocational training, establishes the implementation of vocational training programs for students with specific educational needs. Educational administrations may offer vocational training adapted to the needs of students. These programs are aimed at the acquisition of a level 1 professional qualification and the achievement of the necessary skills to facilitate their insertion in the labor market. They are aimed at students with special educational needs who have a certain level of personal and social autonomy that will allow them to get a job. They must be between the ages of 16 and 19. Currently, the adapted professional training programs offered in the Canary Islands are:

- Auxiliary activities in greenhouses, gardens, and garden centers.
- Auxiliary activities on general administrative services.
- Data and document recording activities.
- Shoes and leather goods repairs

Outside the educational sphere, the integrated itineraries for labor market insertion projects, financed by the European Social Fund and managed by the Canarian Employment Service, are aimed at the social and professional training of groups that are difficult to integrate, including people with disabilities. The goal of these programs is to improve their competitiveness and to support them to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to improve their employability. Subsidies for the completion of these itineraries go to non-profit foundations and associations (Canarian Employment Service).

Regarding professional certificates, the regulations that govern them establish that the competent public administrations may carry out training offers adapted to the specific needs of young people who have failed at school, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, women who are victims of gender violence and, in general, people at risk of social exclusion. These offers may include appropriate modules that can be adapted to the specific needs of the beneficiary group (Canarian Employment Service).

Level 1 vocational certification does not require a compulsory secondary education diploma. They consider the completion of internships in companies that contribute to make visible the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities and add value to the curriculum.

Several studies carried out in Spain have deepened the processes of transition from school to employment, focusing on the views of professionals, families and young people with intellectual disabilities themselves (Pallisera, Fullana, Martín and Vila, 2013; Pallisera, Vilá and Fullana 2014; Fullana, Pallisera, Martín, Ferrer and Puyaltó, 2015). Although there are no studies on this subject in the Canary Islands, the experience of one of the authors of this paper, who has been working for more than twenty years in the field of the transition of young people from the educational system to employment, coincides with the result of many of these investigations: the need to work on the curriculum, to promote real work experience and to establish continuity in the orientation processes through the different phases of the educational process, particularly at the end of secondary education (Pallisera, Vila, Fullana, Castro, Puyaltó and DiazGayolera, 2018).

Young people and their families lack information about the training and/or employment alternatives that exist after they leave school (Beyer and Kaehne, 2008). There is also a clear gap between school and after-school services (Pallisera, Vilá, Fullana, Martín, and Puyaltó, 2014). There is no systematic work on the transition process during their time in secondary school and labor inclusion is not seen as a priority during this period (Vilá, Pallisera, and Fullana, 2010). Therefore, the scenario is that of a high number of young people who have finished their schooling without any career plan, disoriented and without information about their social and labor options (Pallisera, Fullana, Martín, and Vilá, 2013).

Role of Occupational Centers and Special Employment Centers in the transition to the labor market

Royal Decree 1/2013 of November 29 defines occupational centers as a resource whose purpose is “to ensure occupational therapy and personal and social adjustment services to persons with disabilities to achieve their maximum personal development and, where possible, facilitate their training and preparation for access to employment.”

In principle, occupational centers do not have a final character to the extent that the Law places them at the level of preparation and training for employment. However, the objective of employment does not seem to be present in them (Gómez Amago 2018).

The document under the title “Transition from Occupational Centers to Special Employment Centers (FSC Inserta and Fundación Once, 2014)” shows that only 58% of occupational centers indicate that employment is part of the content of the strategic or action plan of their organization, and the percentage decreases to 45% among those who establish objectives for the transition to employment. On the other hand, in these centers, people with intellectual disabilities receive training in skills and abilities of various kinds but non-inclusive environments, since all students have some kind of disability. These alternatives do not seem to be consistent with the trajectory of inclusion developed during the school stage (Pallisera Vilá, Fullana, Martín, and Puyaltó, 2014, Fullana, 2015).

The management of occupational centers has been transferred to the autonomous communities. This is the reason why the occupational center model acquires different characteristics. So, there is a model more oriented to employment, in the Basque Country and Navarre, and another one more assistance-oriented in the rest of the autonomous communities except Catalonia, which is between both of them. Over the last years, it has been evident how the assistance model is trying to raise new horizons (FSC Inserta and Fundación Once, 2014).

In the Canary Islands, it is the Island Councils that have the powers transferred to create and maintain occupational centers, by virtue of Decree 113/2002 of August 9 on the transfer of functions to the Public Administration of the autonomous community of the Canary Islands to the Island Councils.

As in other autonomous communities, in the Canary Islands, there is an interest in opening new horizons in occupational centers, projecting them towards the promotion of independent life and employment of their users. Along these lines, the Adepsi Association (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) is committed to a “new model of occupation” for people with intellectual disabilities. This new model advocates for flexible resources that are tailored to the needs of each individual and provide security for them and their families. The goal is to overcome the airtight divisions in occupational centers that cause people to refuse a job for fear of losing their place in the occupational center (Adepsi Association, 2017).

According to the Law 1/2013, special employment centers are those whose main objective is to carry out a productive activity of goods and services, participating regularly in market operations. They are intended to ensure paid employment for people with disabilities, while at the same time being a means of including the highest possible number of these individuals in the ordinary employment regime. In the same way, special employment centers shall provide, through the support units, the personal and social adjustment services requires by the workers with disabilities, according to their circumstances and in accordance with the regulations.

The staff of special employment centers must be made up of at least 70% of people with disabilities. They consider the existence of “support units” whose aim is to provide “personal adjustment” services. They can be created by both public and private bodies. The Ministerial Decree of 16th October 1998 establishes aid for special employment centers aimed at managing jobs, technical assistance, social security allowances, minimum inter-professional wage subsidies, job adaptation, a support unit, etc.

Special employment centers have grown as a result of a policy that has given priority to segregated alternatives over inclusive ones (Jordán de Urríes, 2010), to the extent that there is a higher level of recruitment in special employment centers than in ordinary employment (Díaz Jiménez, 2016).

Although initially special employment centers were created to promote the transition of workers to ordinary employment, this does not happen and in reality, it is not easy to carry out this transition (Díaz Velázquez, 2016).

On the other hand, the group of workers with mild disabilities is displacing that of people with severe disabilities in special employment centers, so the latter are less and less represented (García and Salcedo, 2015).

In the Canary Islands, the Public Administration responsible for special employment centers is the Canary Islands Employment Service. The Canary Islands currently have a total of 58 special employment centers carrying out different activities in the service sector and distributed throughout the different islands of the archipelago, except on the island of El Hierro.

The supported employment model for the employment inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities

The methodology of supported employment is based on the implementation of the assistance that people with disabilities need to get and keep a job in ordinary environments. It was created in the 1970s as an alternative to traditional welfare resources and day programs. It's a way to help those people with disabilities who are not able to get and keep a job on their own (Wehman, 2012). This program is based on an individualized support system, consisting of the provision of the essential help so that the person can carry out a work activity at a certain moment of his/her vital trajectory by himself/herself (Spanish Association of Supported Employment, 2008).

Supported employment is one of the most successful strategies for the employment of people with significant disabilities. It is also one of the most complex and necessary commitments to promote personal development, and the real social integration of people with disabilities (Becerra, Montanero, and Lucero, 2011). It is a model in accordance with current legislation on labor insertion and is a practice of Corporate Social Responsibility (White, 2015). In terms of cost-benefit, research shows that it is more socially and economically advantageous than the special employment center (Jordán de Urriés, de León, Hidalgo, Martínez, and Santamaría, 2014).

Several definitions of supported employment are very similar to each other and only differ in nuances. We will follow the one established in the General Law of Rights of People with Disabilities of 2013: The supported employment services are the set of actions of guidance and individualized accompaniment in the workplace for the social and labor adaptation of disabled workers with special difficulties of labor inclusion in companies of the ordinary labor market under similar conditions to the rest of the workers who hold equivalent positions.

To unify the practice of supported employment, a group of experts from all over Europe, linked to the EUSE (European Union of Supported Employment), created the "Supported Employment Toolkit" in the framework of the Leonardo Project (2008); its use has spread throughout Europe. The implementation of the methodology by other groups raised the need to deepen the development of the Toolkit so that, within the framework of a new Leonardo project (2012-2014), the "EUSE Diversity Toolkit" was created whose target group is extended to young people at risk of social exclusion, ex-drug addicts and ex-prisoners (EUSE, 2015).

Supported employment is developed in the following phases (EUSE, 2015):

1. Customer commitment: Many potential users of supported employment services are day center users, who receive support from care or mental health resources. Entities that promote supported employment try to encourage these people to explore employment as a way to improve their quality of life.

2. Profile definition: This is the process by which users' aspirations, learning needs, individual skills, past experiences, and job preferences are identified. Family members and other professionals who provide support to users are involved in its development.

3. Employers' commitment: The third crucial element is the marketing process with entrepreneurs. It aims to help them overcome their barriers and prejudices in terms of employment inclusion of people with disabilities. Experts contact employers to search for job offers or identify job opportunities that are suitable for people with intellectual disabilities.

4. Workplace adjustments: Once the employer's commitment is secured, a job analysis is conducted. This analysis checks everything in the formal description of the analysis and thoroughly examines several issues, including health and safety. This analysis can lead to a reconfiguration of the job, so that it fits the profile of the workers, or to the creation of new jobs that fit their characteristics and are profitable for the employer.

5. Support at work and outside work: Support or training at the workplace is individualized and provided when necessary to ensure adequate performance and good use of resources. Such support is usually provided by a job coach. This support is not only aimed at achieving adequate levels of performance, but also at improving their social integration, so it can be given at work and outside of it. Support, both at and outside work, is provided according to the needs of the worker with disabilities. It goes beyond the worker themselves since it is also provided to co-workers so that they take on the role of natural supports. The role of natural supports is of vital importance since they teach and help the worker throughout the process and assume a relevant role, particularly when the job coach begins to retire.

6. Career development: The supported employment model will encourage the development of the employees' careers, promoting training opportunities, and the acquisition of greater responsibilities within the company.

Supported employment in the Canary Islands

Supported employment began in Spain in the late 1980s with the Aura project in Barcelona, directed by Gloria Canals and Montserrat Domenech. The celebration of the I Symposium of Supported Employment in Mallorca in 1991 was a milestone for its implementation and diffusion in Spain.

Supported employment in the Canary Islands is currently developed by different entities specialized in the field of labor integration of people with disabilities.

Sinpromi: Insular Society to Promote People with Disabilities (Tenerife)

Supported employment arrived in the Canary Islands in 1994 thanks to the Island Council of Tenerife. The origins of the supported employment program are related to the Council's concern to promote access to regular employment for people who have traditionally been users of occupational centers. This concern gave rise to the development project of supported employment by the Council, whose goal was the labor inclusion of a group of people with intellectual disabilities (some of the users of occupational centers) in companies of the tourism sector. The success of this first experience led this entity to institutionalize the supported employment program. Later, it was entrusted to Sinpromi, a public institution owned by the Council, created in 1993 to promote the social and labor integration of people with disabilities (Sinpromi, 2018). The program was upgraded from a pilot project to a permanent service with a permanent staff of job coaches and employment technicians.

Since it began, Sinpromi has promoted access to employment for over 700 people with intellectual disabilities, as well as several local and European projects. These projects have aimed to spread the methodology of supported employment, as well as to make society and companies aware of the need to highlight the values of inclusion, solidarity, and respect for diversity as strategic management elements that increase their value.

People with intellectual disabilities officially recognized who want to get a job, go to Sinpromi's supported employment service, which helps them design their professional profile based on their expectations, abilities and the demands of the labor market. An intensive search for jobs is then carried out based on this profile. Although this search is carried out by the service technicians, the users and their families are also encouraged to look for jobs.

Once a job position arises, it is analyzed to obtain detailed information about its demands. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the profiles that fit the job. These users are interviewed by the employer, who decides who will be the final candidate, with the advice of the job coach if required. The selected candidate starts the job together with the job coach, who shows him/her the tasks of the job, as well as supporting him/her in the process of adaptation to the social and labor environment, staying with the worker as long as necessary until guaranteeing an adequate performance of the job. During this training period, the worker detects among the employees' possible natural supports that will intervene in the process from the beginning and that will assume, as far as possible, the role of the job coach when the latter has already left. The job coach will carry out a follow-up throughout the user's working life, intervening whenever the user or the company requires it.

Adislan (Lanzarote)

This non-profit organization was created in 1969 to assist people with intellectual disabilities and their families. In 2009 it began to manage projects for social and labor integration. The ultimate goal of the labor integration service for people with intellectual disabilities is the social and labor integration of people with intellectual disabilities on the island of Lanzarote in special employment centers or ordinary companies, depending on their support needs. Its services are:

- Designing personalized training and socio-personal adjustment plans
- Information on employment and training offers
- Information, guidance, and advice on aids for people with disabilities and work compatibility (employment and benefits)
- Training for active job search and job skills

- Assistance in the incorporation into the labor market
- Support once the employment relationship begins
- Information and guidance for families
- The services offered to companies are:
 - Information and advice on current regulations on employment and disability.
 - Taking up job offers
 - Analysis and evaluation of jobs
 - Pre-selection of candidates
 - Follow-up of the incorporation into the labor market
 - Training and awareness actions aimed at entrepreneurs

Adislan is integrated within the Spanish Association of Supported Employment and applies the model following its phases and principles.

Down Las Palmas (Gran Canaria)

It is a non-profit organization that was created in 1987 by a group of relatives of people with Down's syndrome. It aims to "promote the development, normalization, and full integration of this people" (Down Las Palmas, 2019). They carry out their social work through several work programs that cover the entire life cycle of people with Down's syndrome. Among them is the supported employment program. This association carries out collaboration agreements with companies both for internships and for employment. Therefore, the supported employment methodology is carried out in two fields:

1. Internship students: These are young people who need more training and maturity to get a job, or who have not managed to get a job; they need to train and continue learning, expand new content and learn other professional profiles to broaden their curriculum.

2. Recruitment: Young people who get a paid job that fits their profile.

The two areas of action have the same support and monitoring, with emphasis on the natural support provided by the company's staff. Such support begins by being intensive, extending to almost the entire working day, and gradually decreases without disappearing since contact is always maintained with companies, families, and the young people themselves. The entity's staff provides training to companies before the incorporation of young people.

Adepsi (Gran Canaria)

The ADEPSI association is a non-profit organization whose goal is "the social and labor inclusion of people with disabilities and their families by promoting improvements in their quality of life" (Adepsi association, 2017). This organization: 1) evaluates the profiles, skills, and knowledge of people with disabilities to promote their incorporation into employment; 2) offers training tailored to the needs of companies by providing several professional certificates, as well as training cross-curricular training; 3) provides personalized service to companies for the recruitment of people with disabilities that consists of social and employment counseling (legislation, grants, and subsidies for recruitment, alternative employment measures...), advice on corporate social responsibility, job center, and monitoring, and support in the process of incorporation into the job.

The implementation of the supported employment methodology is based on actions of professional assistance, guidance, labor intermediation, and training in

competences for employment, so that the process of searching for, incorporating into, and maintaining a job has greater guarantees.

The ASEPSI association is committed to the employment and occupation model proposed by AEDIS (Business Association for Disability). This model is in line with both the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Spanish Constitution, as well as with the guiding principles of the Full Inclusion associative movement, focused on the life journey of the person with a disability and on adapting the environment to the person and not the person to the model (Adepsi association, 2017).

Conclusions

This overview of the situation of the transition to employment and the employment of people with intellectual disabilities leads us to the following considerations:

1) In the Canary Islands, there is barely any data regarding the labor inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in ordinary jobs. The Canary Islands employment monitoring center (OBECAN) has data regarding the employment of people with disabilities, broken down by types among which intellectual and developmental disabilities are not included (Government of the Canary Islands, n.d.). There is information and data on job seekers in occupational centers and care homes; however, it is not possible to obtain data on people with intellectual disabilities who are job seekers, who might be working or who are currently working.

2) As in many other territories, the predominant image of people with disabilities is that of a recipient of pensions or any kind of assistance, with low potential for job performance and a high level of unemployment (Mank, 2008). This is especially prominent when referring to people with intellectual disabilities and special support needs, who are mostly considered “too disabled to work” (Cimera, Burges, Novak and Avellone, 2014). Employment expectations need to be promoted and reinforced within the family itself from an early age. There is no point in raising the awareness of institutions and society, in general, to promote active policies and employment opportunities if the family does not encourage the development of life projects in which employment holds a central place.

3) It is essential to protect the transition period to adult life and employment of people with intellectual disabilities. This requires the training of professionals and working on their attitudes towards students with disabilities so that both professionals and people with intellectual disabilities appreciate the value of their “different abilities”, and their contribution to the social and economic growth of their environment.

4) It is necessary to reinforce the training offer by adapting it to the characteristics of people with intellectual disabilities both in the school environment and after school. This way, people with disabilities will be free to choose what they like rather than what is available. Moreover, it is necessary to adapt the offer to the demands of the labor market, otherwise, it is a waste of time and resources and a source of frustration for the people themselves.

5) It is necessary to carry out transition plans from an early age, regardless of the severity of the disability. These plans must involve education professionals, entities

working on labor inclusion, the families, and the people with intellectual disabilities; these plans must be developed beyond the school period.

6) There needs to be a reinforcement of the evolution that some occupational centers in the Canary Islands are undergoing from assistance to training and employment. This way, these centers will be able to prepare users for their labor inclusion and will be located within the employability resources map. The transition role of special employment centers to ordinary employment is important. They should provide a place for people with disabilities and greater support needs. It is also necessary to match the economic investment in special employment centers with that made in programs for access to ordinary employment. It is important to remember that the ultimate goal established by the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is access to employment under equal conditions.

7) Entering a supported employment program is an ideal alternative. The problem is the lack of programs and personnel (Fullana, 2015). In the Canary Islands, and more specifically on the island of Tenerife, Sinpromi is the only organization that has consolidated a program of these characteristics. Something similar happens in other islands and in some, it has not yet been implemented. The competent entities in the field of employment must promote a program of subsidies, monitoring, and supervision that stimulates the development of the supported employment programs to reach the greatest number of beneficiaries.

8) It is important to document the programs, as well as to collect and systematize as much data as possible to promote research in this field, aimed at increasing knowledge in this area, as well as optimizing decision-making processes both the technical and political levels.

The thoughts presented in this paper allow us to devise future lines of research related to the subject of supported employment. For example, empirical studies could be carried out on how this model of professional performance affects access to employment for people with intellectual disabilities; research of a quantitative and qualitative nature could also be designed to analyze the effectiveness of the model for optimum management of diversity in the company workforce.

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