

ICLife: Tools for inclusion

How to make life on a campus for higher education more inclusive.

Tool: Inclusive Adult education



Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

What's in a name?

The aim of 'Inclusive Adult Education' is to educate more people with intellectual disabilities in mainstream adult education and thus to refer them less to specific training pathways specifically designed for them. Today, there is little or no offer for this target group within mainstream adult education in Belgium. In this way, the group of people with intellectual disabilities can be better supported so that they can find a job with good career prospects more easily and quickly at any stage of their working life.



In this project extra attention and energy is given to selection, guidance and support of the students with intellectual disabilities throughout the entire project.

In short, the goal of the "Inclusive Adult Education" project is to: strengthen people with intellectual disabilities; offer them more

opportunities for a sustainable job; provide training in ordinary adult education in an inclusive way.

Within this project several people with intellectual disabilities are taking pilot projects within adult education. During the first pilot year, for example, we investigated what is needed to make inclusive education for persons with intellectual disabilities possible. The result of the project is a roadmap that shows step by step how Centres for Adult Education can open up their courses to students with a disability. The roadmap is intended for adult education in Flanders who, as part of their diversity policy, are looking for inspiration to make their training courses accessible to people with intellectual disabilities. The roadmap contains a step-by-step plan, in which at each step it is described which actors are best involved to realise them. Unfortunately, the roadmap is only available in Dutch.

All Centres for Adult Education in Flanders (Belgium) today face the challenge of guiding people with a large distance to the labour market through training to work. People with a mental disability belong to this group and their motivation to find work is often very high. By making the training and guidance of a Centre for Adult Education accessible to people with intellectual disabilities, the Centre for Adult Education will at the same time also become more accessible to an extensive group of potential learners for whom today there are still too many barriers to access adult education.

Target group

People with an intellectual disability

Psychologically, education means more confidence and self-assurance for people with intellectual disabilities. Regarding the socio-communicative part we can conclude that people with an intellectual disability who studied have more positive relationships towards others, make contact more easily and -in the end -have a lot more friends afterwards. Participating at a university's campus means widening their horizons with a range of interests, hobbies, access to new networks and broadening the look on their living environments.



The regular students

For the regular students helping someone with an intellectual disability is definitely an added value. It brings responsibility, self-confidence and more. Regular students happen to close themselves off less from other communities and open up more to new cultures when they participate in Inclusive Adult Education.

What's needed?

During the first lesson weeks, a "supporter" from project partners was present. The supporter helped the inclusive student familiarize himself with the lesson and gave tips to teachers and sometimes also to fellow students. After a few weeks, support was only offered where necessary, which usually happened remotely. Support during the lesson was done in a natural way, from fellow students. Teachers indicated

that this support is needed, especially at the start of the lessons, later also during the preparation of the internship and the supervision of the internship.

Budget

An inclusive Adult Education requires extra resources. Schools for Adult Education that opt for inclusion can in the first phase use their own resources as efficiently as possible to promote inclusion. In this context we think, for example, of adapting or expanding the task of a care coordinator or of the learning path counselor who draws up a plan for supporting students with specific educational needs. Extra resources are needed for activities such as:

- Training teachers in Universal Design for Learning and inclusive teaching methods; education of persons with a (intellectual) disability.
- The preparation of a support plan and its follow-up.
- Adjusting materials (time investment, tools).
- Coaching teachers, follow-up and possibly intervention.
- Coaching the inclusive student.
- Setting up an internship.

Who gets what out of it?

The final target group are persons with an intellectual disability that are eager to develop their capacities and find (assisted) work.

Frans is a Assisted Worker at the police in the city of Geel. One of his tasks is to maintain the bikes, which until last year was mainly about cleaning the bikes. He wanted to follow the training bicycle repairer to be able to do minor repairs on the bikes. Frans started last year in training bicycle repair in School for adult education at CVO-HIK in Geel, Belgium. He did an internship at his work post. He is now also working on his own bicycle, but wants to become even more proficient and has therefore entered the bicycle repair course again this year.

Frans told his job coach that he would like to work in a bicycle shop. Contacts have already

been made with a bicycle repair shop, after the winter he can lend a hand there.

By developing inclusive pathways in education, the school for Adult Education develops more openness to a wide variety of persons that today find it difficult to enter Adult Education.

The “Inclusive Adult Education” project aims to make the government and other stakeholders aware of the fact that the right to further education, as described in the UN Convention, is also possible for people with a disability.