

**Transition scenarios for young people with learning disabilities in
Spain. Relationships and discrepancies.**

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Abstract: This paper examines transition scenarios to adult and active life in Spain from an inclusive viewpoint. For people with learning disabilities, the transition to adult life is a particularly complex process worldwide, and this is especially true in Spain. The multitude of services and professionals involved, the diversity of views regarding what represents integration, the difficult coordination between school and post-school services, these are just some of the situations that pose obstacles in constructing paths towards transition. An overall understanding of the relationships existing between the different scenarios in which these processes take place is fundamental if the necessary actions for improvement are to be established. This article aims to analyse this situation, presenting the main discrepancies observed in and between Spanish schools and the post-school services that condition the fulfilment of objectives relating to inclusion in society and the workplace. The article concludes by proposing actions for fostering the transition to adult life from an inclusive perspective.

Key words: Social Inclusion; Work Inclusion; Transition to Adult and active life; Young People with Learning Disabilities, Secondary Education.

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Introduction

Despite the abundant literature generated over the last 25 years regarding the transition to adulthood and working life for people with learning disabilities, it remains a current issue, and is considered one of the more complex challenges facing young people and adults. Work, participation in education and training after compulsory secondary education, living and looking after one's own home, participating in different areas of the community, experiencing satisfactory social and personal relationships, these are all objectives commonly included in what is considered transition (Cobb and Alwell, 2009), and they constitute particularly difficult achievements for people with learning disabilities.

The issue of transition for young people with learning disabilities has generated abundant contributions to the literature from around the world (Hudson, 2006; Kaehne and Beyer, 2009; Win and Hay, 2009, etc.), allowing us to observe what actions are being undertaken in different contexts to promote transition processes and to ascertain what measures are being proposed on different levels (legislative, professional, curricular). The common problem constituted by transition to adulthood has led to the contextualised analysis of experiences in different countries, facilitating our understanding of our own reality and helping us to propose strategies for improvement.

In Spain, very few studies have been conducted with the aim of focusing strictly on a broad analysis of transition to provide information on how transition processes develop towards the desired objectives of integration in society and the workplace. This is partly due to the inexistence of a legal framework focusing specifically on transition.

Valls and Jové, 2001 and Rosselló and Verger, 2008) show how the path taken by people with learning disabilities from school to employment in Spain rarely passes through what could be regarded as ordinary environments. Valls and Jové (2001) conduct an analysis of the paths followed by young people with learning disabilities throughout their schooling and after they have left school. Rosselló and Verger (2008) investigate the transition between the end of compulsory education and the beginning of working life for young people with disabilities in the Autonomous Region of the Balearic Islands. The study analyses the degree to which the content of education really promotes subsequent integration in the workplace on the basis of questionnaires administered to teaching staff and in-depth interviews with business owners and people with disabilities.

Both studies demonstrate that after leaving school most people with learning disabilities go on to become users of specific social services, whether these are day centres, occupational centres or protected employment services.

In addition to these studies, further research has been carried out in recent years that provides data regarding integration in the workplace for people with learning disabilities (Jordán *et al*, 2005; Pallisera and Rius, 2007; Vilà *et al*, 2007). These studies provide information regarding how processes for integration in the workplace are implemented in ordinary companies, and factors which facilitate said integration. However, the existing literature fails to be sufficiently multidimensional in its analysis of transition processes. It therefore fails to provide a broad perspective of the scenario in which transition processes and the inter-relationships between the principal actors take place. In line with Hudson (2006), we believe that, in order to have a positive effect on improving transition processes, a diagnosis is required that allows an in-depth view of the context in which these processes are constructed and conducted. This would provide

us with an overall comprehension of the process itself and both the main obstacles and potential possibilities upon which paths towards transition are based.

It is essential to have an overall understanding of the scenarios involved in the transition processes. Individual paths towards transition follow concrete scenarios articulated by the services, projects and places in which individuals assume different roles throughout their transition, whether through participation in some of these or through avoidance of them.

The aim of this article is therefore to analyse the scenarios in Spain that comprise contexts interacting on the aforementioned paths towards transition, highlighting the principal relationships within them and the discrepancies between them. In doing this we intend to demonstrate some of the specific characteristics of transition processes from an inclusive perspective, within our own context. When we have a greater understanding of transition, we will be able to improve the particular paths followed by people with learning disabilities on their journey towards social integration in adult life.

We approach this study in the following way: firstly, we analyse the relationship between services provided in the education system and those provided after schooling, organised by the social and employment services. Following this, we take a look at the scenario offered by postschool alternatives to analyse the relationships and discrepancies existing between them. We then return to the education system to analyse how school, or the education system, acts as a transition scenario. And finally, in the conclusions, we propose actions resulting from the analysis we have conducted, aimed at fostering the transition to adulthood from an inclusive viewpoint.

A general overview of the relationships between school and postschool services

Transition processes to adulthood and working life have been compared to a bridge; this is a powerful image, allowing us to relate, analyse and reflect on the role of the school or education system in general and the role played by post-school and employment services. Thus, McDonald, Wilcox and Bowles (in Lichtenstein, 1989: 509) state that the transition to working life resembles a bridge, the success of which relies on strong reinforcement and consolidation of the two arch supports. Specifically, they say that *“Like a bridge, transition is only as strong as the foundation on either side (the quality of school preparation on one side and the quality of adult service opportunities on the other) and the construction of the span itself (the planning process). If any of these components are inadequate, the chances of the student success in the community is greatly reduced”*.

The bridge metaphor is particularly useful for conducting a global analysis of transition, as it provides us with a general overview of the process and allows us to analyse the scenarios that come into play within each context. In this first section we address, “from a bird’s-eye view”, transition as a phenomenon that relates scenarios connected with schooling to the scenarios of post-school adult life. Our first observation refers to the fact that a multitude of services and projects commonly coexist alongside one another, generating a complex network of relationships.

The Spanish social services system was first developed in the 1980s, after the dictatorship had ended (Franco died in 1975) and the period of transition to democracy had begun. Prior to the 1980s, as there was no public social services system available, support services for the more vulnerable were in the hands of non-professional charitable religious institutions. As a consequence of the delay in establishing social services caused by the dictatorship, the incorporation of professionals in the field of

social education on social projects for people with learning disabilities has also been somewhat delayed in comparison with other European countries. This has led to a slow evolution in this country from initial focus on care work to inclusive perspectives, and scarce professional recognition for the professionals themselves, generating excessive mobility among professionals and causing difficulties in establishing stable professional teams (Fullana *et al*, 2009).

With regard to legislation on disabilities, it was not until 1982 that the Spanish parliament approved the Law on the Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities (LISMI). The basic idea behind the LISMI is that measures aimed at promoting educational, cultural, working and social conditions for people with disabilities be implemented by means of their integration into nonspecialised institutions, except in cases where individual characteristics require particular care from special services and centres (Article 6).

Although the services we find on both sides of the bridge derive from the same Act (LISMI, 1982), there are substantial differences with regard to philosophy, organisation of services and professionals involved. Some of these services are located within the education system, others within the domain of social welfare and employment, which entails dependence on different administrative departments. With regard to the philosophy or perspective that guides care for people with special educational needs, it can be observed that gradual progress is being made in schools towards an inclusive model that frames the educational actions being taken within this context, emphasising strategies that facilitate education for all in ordinary environments and making diversity a source of collective enrichment.

With regard to care in post-school spheres, and specifically in that of work, the LISMI establishes its goal as the integration of people with learning disabilities into the

ordinary employment system; in cases where this is not possible, they are incorporated by means of the protected employment system (Article 37). Among those services categorised as “protected”, the most important are Special Employment Centres (*Centros Especiales de Empleo* or CEEs) and Occupational Centres (*Centros Ocupacionales* or COs). The aim of CEEs is to provide users with productive work, offering in exchange remuneration and personal and social adaptation services (Article 42). Occupational Centres constitute the non-working care alternative for adult people when they are not considered sufficiently productive. Specialised Care Centres (*Centros de Atención Especializada* or CAEs) are aimed at people with learning disabilities with generalised care needs who require a higher intensity level of care. In this country, services for adults (whether occupational, work-related, day-care, residential, leisure and free time, etc.) are organised by private foundations that receive funds from the public administration. Therefore, they are private organisations managing public services, and their budget basically depends on State funding. By contrast with the services provided at school age, no common curricula exist in organised post-school services on which to base social education actions, which means that there are considerable differences in content and methodology between the social education programmes organised by the different services.

We therefore see that the centres, programmes and services where people with learning disabilities receive support and attention after compulsory school education constitute a protected context, due to the fact that they are specific services/centres where only people with disabilities work. Along with these specific services, since the beginning of the Nineties we also find a growing number of initiatives fostering integration in the workplace by means of supported employment. These initiatives are generally implemented by organisations other than the foundations that organise the broad range of

services aimed at people with learning disabilities. Pallisera *et al* (2003) provide an explanation of how services dedicated to offering employment alternatives to young people and adults with learning disabilities have evolved in Spain in recent years, demonstrating the relationships existing between the “protected” services and those providing care work. Jordán *et al* (2005) provide quantitative data related to the situation surrounding employment with support during the middle of this decade, demonstrating the increase in these initiatives in Spain. Both sources highlight some of the principal problems facing supported employment, of which it is worth highlighting little stability in funding these projects. It was not until 2007 that the long-awaited and acclaimed supported employment regulation (Royal Decree 870/2007) appeared, after a long and arduous process in which internal tensions within the sector and the predominance of protectionist measures had a considerable effect on negotiations (Jordán and Verdugo, 2007).

More than the existence of diversity in services, it is the diversity in approaches towards inclusion that creates one of the main obstacles to transition to adulthood for young people with learning disabilities, particularly for those who have followed a process of inclusive schooling. In the following sections we provide more detailed analysis of some of the main characteristics of contexts relating to transition on each side of the bridge.

Analysing postschool alternatives: relationships and discrepancies

The role of work is not the only one held by adults, nor the only end purpose of transition processes. It is, however, at this time, if not the main, then one of the basic conditions for achieving significant participation in the community from an inclusive

viewpoint. As well as the satisfaction of fulfilling an adult role which is valued by society, work also provides a salary, which in turn provides the possibility of access to freely chosen alternatives (with regard to housing and culture), above and beyond those organised solely for people with disabilities. This is why a study of transition processes requires the analysis of processes for integration in the workplace and the relationship established between scenarios related to fulfilling the role of work.

The situation is complex in Spain if we take into account the latest official data, which demonstrate the problems people with learning disabilities encounter in the world of work. The latest available data are taken from the Survey on Disability, Personal Autonomy and Situations of Dependence (*La Encuesta de Discapacidad, Autonomía personal y situaciones de Dependencia*) conducted by the National Statistics Institute (2008). A survey of the data shows that only 28.3% of the working age population with disabilities are actually working. People with learning disabilities are among the lowest percentages with regard to employment. Above and beyond figures, and in an attempt to analyse the causes of this situation in more depth, an analysis of scenarios which interact in the post-school sphere in response to the needs of people with disabilities to integrate in the workplace show that one of the main obstacles in the transition process from an inclusive viewpoint is a lack of effective internal coordination between services aimed at young people and adults with learning disabilities.

Thus, the transition from a Occupational Centre (where therapeutic occupation is implemented as a learning methodology) to a Special Employment Centre (*Centro Especial de Empleo* or CEE, where all workers have a disability, an employment contract and the salary is equivalent to the minimum wage) is truly difficult, as it is to move from a Special Employment Centre to ordinary employment in the community. The truth is that, although Article 42.1. of the LISMI (1982) establishes that Special

Employment Centres constitute the main transition mechanism for people with disabilities to ordinary employment, this objective is clearly not fulfilled. With regard to this, we would like to highlight the research conducted in recent years by Cueto *et al* (2009), constituting as it does one of the first studies to provide a rigorous analysis of the role of Special Employment Centres as a key measure in employment policies aimed at people with disabilities in Spain. This research involves an exhaustive analysis of the situation surrounding Special Employment Centres in different regions of Spain, confirming, following analysis of the available data, that CEEs do not contribute to people with disabilities' integration in the workplace, but rather constitute a destination in themselves.

One explanation for this situation is found in a particular characteristic of CEEs: the fact that the administration funds, in addition to the employer taxes to be paid by the company, 50% of the salary of each disabled person on the payroll at said centres. Clearly, here is a reason for managers of the centres to be reluctant to sanction the transfer of the "good workers" to ordinary employment. This would require the establishment of sufficiently powerful internal training systems to allow workers "transferred" to ordinary employment to be substituted while maintaining the same level of production. There can be no doubt that the dual social work/employment function of this type of centre is extremely complex: on the one hand, CEEs depend on the labour market and must meet production targets; on the other, they have a clear social objective, which is why they are amply funded. With only a few exceptions, the economic objective is clearly the priority and conditions decision-making with regard to integration in the workplace.

Integration in the workplace appears as an objective with clearly differentiated meanings for the different services aimed at people with disabilities: for some services,

the simple fact of doing productive work is inclusive in itself, regardless of the environment in which it is done; for others, we can only speak of integration in the workplace when work is being done in an ordinary company. The former option is the one generally held by the protected employment sector (the Special Employment Centres), and is explained in part by the need to justify keeping workers with disabilities at Special Employment Centres. Services and projects being carried out as part of the supported employment initiative are currently more effectively facilitating integration in the workplace for people with disabilities in ordinary environments from an inclusive perspective (Pallisera *et al*, 2003, Jordán *et al*, 2005, Vilà *et al*, 2007).

It is worth pointing out that various different professional organisations working in the sphere of disabilities and agents in the world of work (unions, for example) are demanding that social and employment policies be revised to promote integration in the workplace. With regard to this, there are high expectations surrounding the 2008-12 Global strategy for action in employment for people with disabilities (*Estrategia global de acción para el empleo de personas con discapacidad*), approved by the Spanish government in September 2008, which proposes, among other things, an overhaul of the protected employment system, promoting both the transition of users of Occupational Centres to Special Employment Centres, and of users of the latter to the ordinary labour market (Ministry for Employment and Immigration, 2008). Only time will tell whether these good intentions will ultimately lead to the defining of concrete proposals to promote inclusive dynamics within this scenario.

The education system as a scenario of the transition process

There can be no doubt that schools constitute an extremely relevant scenario in transition processes, particularly during the period of compulsory secondary school education. In Spain, pupils complete their compulsory secondary school education (*enseñanza secundaria obligatoria* or ESO) between the ages of 12 and 16 at what are known as *institutos de educación secundaria* (IES). Only if they pass ESO may they then go on to do vocational training (*formación profesional*) or continue their academic studies with the *bachillerato*, equivalent to A-levels in the UK. An analysis of transition processes requires the study of how school is positioned and which bridges or paths may facilitate integration into society and the workplace.

Despite the fact that the organisation of both education and social and employment services share different characteristics in different countries, the experiences and analyses conducted in other contexts can help to guide us in the analysis of our own transition system. With regard to this, the study conducted by Rusch *et al* (2009) serves to illustrate the US context. The aim of this study was to find out why, despite there being legislation in place to promote transition processes, students with learning disabilities continue to have problems finding work, extending their education beyond compulsory secondary, or living independently, even after following specific transition programs. An analysis of this situation allowed them to consider the construction of new bridges which might facilitate the transition processes. Two of these bridges refer specifically to the role of the education services in *leadership and guidance* for transition processes: firstly, they establish that secondary schools must guarantee all students are able to identify a possible and desired placement after secondary education and that school professionals offer the necessary support for every student to complete the transition that will lead them to this objective (whether related to education, work or

any other area); a second bridge refers to the necessary coordination secondary schools must implement in this process. These authors recommend that secondary schools assume the responsibility of leading the transition process, due to the fact that they are in a unique position to assume the role of informing families and students: they have specific knowledge of the process followed by each student and their current situation in relation to disabilities and potential opportunities, and have easy access to this. These are arguments that we may perfectly extrapolate to the Spanish context: schools are organised as territorialised services that receive resources from the government, possess pedagogical knowledge, and therefore have the resources to apply good practices. In addition to this, schools are universally recognised as being focused on preparing children and young people to participate actively in our society. As a consequence, schools should be actively involved in planning the transition and coordinating services to respond to the needs of young people with learning disabilities with regard to participation in society and the workplace.

Together with the “bridges” mentioned by these authors, we would add another factor that makes school or the education system a key factor: it is the ideal domain for offering educational resources that can facilitate the transition processes. With regard to this, Kohler and Field (2003:176) insist on the need to consider the employment of *transition-focused education*, which consists of education focusing on the academic and extracurricular activities necessary for adult life, starting with the needs and support each young person requires, and taking into account personal skills and choices. On the basis of these premises, we pose the following questions to guide our analysis of the role played by school in Spain:

1. Does the education system offer adequate education in preparing young people with learning disabilities for their transition processes?

2. Are schools in the position to be able to act as leaders in the process of transition to adulthood?

We will now focus on the each of these questions:

- **Does the education system offer adequate education in preparing young people with learning disabilities for their transition processes?**

One of the main sources of information for educational content that fosters integration in the workplace and society is the study of good inclusive practices at the post-school stage. To this end, in recent years some researches focused on labour integration for people with learning disabilities by means of the supported system have been carried out in Spain.

These studies (Pallisera et al, 2005; Vilà et al, 2007) lead us to consider that, although integration in the workplace for people with learning disabilities clearly depends on the interaction of diverse factors, the education they receive is fundamental. Although the supported employment services involved immediately prior to their incorporation in the workplace play an important role in these integration processes, the education received on their journey through the education system is a key element in conditioning their working future. What is more, they agree with regard to the evaluation of socio-personal skills that allow good personal relationships in the workplace and constitute one argument for recommending the need to develop these skills during compulsory education in order to facilitate the transition process to adulthood. Thus, the capacity to take decisions and accept guidance, responsibility, adjusted self-esteem, empathy in social relationships and the capacity to adapt to the environment and possible changes, resolving problems in the workplace, etc. are all skills which are very highly valued in

the world of work. These skills form part of the components considered to be key in self-determination (Wehmeyer, 1998).

As the need arises for self-awareness, decision-making, the capacity to defend one's own interests and needs – self-defence, demonstrating the ability to be independent in conducting different activities, etc., *self-determination* presents itself as a necessary educational domain. It is without doubt one of the “invisible” components on CVs, and therefore often forgotten in education itself. Wehmeyer and Palmer (2003) reveal that three years after finishing secondary school, those students with learning disabilities who achieve higher scores in self-determination in the final year of secondary school are more likely to find work and have a higher salary. Martin *et al* (2007) and Trainor (2008) document diverse studies that highlight the importance of self-determination as a key factor in facilitating students with greater opportunities for inclusion after secondary education, insisting on including the use of specific communication skills on secondary school curriculums that allow students to establish and defend their central position at meetings with different professionals throughout the transition process. Test *et al* (2009), in a study aimed at identifying elements that act as predictors for positive post-school outcomes in the areas of education, work and/or independent life, consider training in self-help and self-determination skills as one of the 16 predictors, strongly correlating with positive results in employment or with continuing education after compulsory secondary education. Madaus *et al* (2008), in their study on elements to be taken into account on training programmes during secondary school to facilitate integration in the workplace, insist on considering the need for pupils to learn self-determination skills in secondary education.

In Spain, over recent years we have conducted research aimed at studying the schooling process followed by pupils with learning disabilities in secondary school education in

Spain (Vilà *et al*, 2010). This research has revealed that at secondary level pupils with learning disabilities are schooled either at special education centres, or ordinary centres, some of them in the latter case following a system of dual schooling. A total of 18 secondary schools were studied during the 2006-7 school year, conducting an in-depth analysis of what type of attention pupils with learning disabilities received, the support they received, and specifically training focused on inclusion in the workplace and society (areas, objectives, organisation and methodology, etc.). The research highlights the diversity of options provided in the different centres for attending to pupils with special needs deriving from disability: we found multiple schooling options, from the allocation of specific classrooms at centres where pupils spend most of the school day, to professional support within the context of the ordinary classroom. Work on content relating to social and employment training was relegated behind that of the common secondary school curriculum, focused on academic content. Emphasis on the former content varies, but in most cases it constitutes a few hours of training per week focused on guidance regarding alternatives available in post compulsory education.

Special education centres run specific programmes on transition to working life for 16 to 18-year-olds, developing skills necessary for independent living. Paradoxically, the results of our study show that most pupils at ordinary schools, and regardless of the type of classroom in which they are placed, follow curricular adaptations with a clear dominance of the academic content on the secondary school curriculum. We therefore observe a similar situation to that highlighted by Winn and Hay (2009) in Australia, where the emphasis is on physical inclusion in regular classrooms and on the formal curriculum designed for students without disabilities.

- **Are schools in the position to be able to act as leaders in the process of transition to adulthood?**

The diversity of services and perspectives related to said transition demands both good coordination between the centres involved and clearly establishing who is to lead said processes. Hudson (2006) points out that one of the key problems for transition in the UK is the lack of leadership. The same can easily be said of our own context. In Spain, the lack of legislation for promoting concrete actions facilitating the transition to adulthood and a working life and inadequate initial training of secondary school teachers to work from an inclusive perspective constitute two of the main explanatory factors for this situation. These factors contribute to transition not being considered a goal towards which all possible actions should be aimed from all areas. Neither is the transition process considered a common goal shared by all of the professionals involved, which makes it difficult to focus training actions or coordinate and direct the efforts of the main actors and all other involved parties (families, training services, alternative employment, etc.). Reaching further into the role of professionals, Winn and Hay (2009) correctly state that the complexity of transition processes requires greater involvement than is currently the case: responsibility for working with pupils with disabilities should not lie solely with guidance counsellors, educational psychologists, or therapy specialists, but should rather be clearly constituted as a key objective of school education assumed by all professionals involved in secondary education, including teachers.

One fundamental element explaining why it is difficult for school to be a scenario for the transition process is clearly the initial training received by secondary school teachers. In Spain, at least until the 2009-10 academic year, when some universities have begun to offer a specific Master's Degree in Secondary School Teacher Training adapted to the directives of the European Higher Education Area, secondary school teachers did not receive any other training than a brief pedagogical course following the

end of their university degree in their specialised field. Sánchez Palomino (2007) has conducted research focused on secondary school teachers, specifically analysing training, attitudes, beliefs and ideas related to educating pupils with disabilities following the aforementioned brief pedagogical course. We shall refer to only a couple of results from this study: over 90% of future teachers surveyed consider that education for pupils with disabilities is more effective in centres specifically designed for this purpose; furthermore, 96% consider the attention required by students with disabilities in an ordinary school is the work of specialists. These attitudes may of course change once they actually begin work as a secondary school teacher. What is more, in-service training can contribute effectively to changing these initial attitudes. It is not, however, an ideal starting point from which to focus the education of students with learning disabilities on the transition process, nor for the schools themselves to be able to exercise the necessary leadership in coordination processes for successfully carrying out these processes. One unavoidable issue in considering actions for improving transition is suitable training for the professionals involved.

Conclusions: “From little acorns great oaks grow”.

The transition to adulthood and working life is a complex process, and there is no sole definitive factor in ensuring its success; skills are important, as is training, and receiving the necessary support. As Kohler and Field (2003) state, transition is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the young people concerned and their families, economic conditions, community contexts and accessibility to services. The impossibility of having full control over these variables poses a significant challenge for those involved in the transition process. However, research demonstrates that professionals, the education and employment services themselves and families of pupils

with learning disabilities can help them to develop skills by facilitating services, support and appropriate opportunities for the types of learning and experiences required by integration in the workplace and society as a whole.

The analysis conducted allows us to identify the main discrepancies occurring between the diverse scenarios that come into play in the processes of transition to adulthood experienced by people with learning disabilities in Spain. Thus, we are able to consider some of the priority actions to be implemented in order to establish a favourable context for this transition.

One priority action, and which requires explicit political commitment, is the construction of a legal framework that recognises transition to adulthood and working life as a basic and central objective of secondary education. This legal framework is fundamental in order to both allow curricular decision-making consistent with the development of adult roles, and to clarify and distribute responsibilities among the different agents involved. As stated by Winn and Hay (2009), the transition process is not the sole responsibility of the person with a disability, their family and education professionals; educational, social and employment policies must also favour the response to the specific needs of this group.

Above and beyond the work that can be done improving the scenario at schools as a basis for transition actions, other actions must also be implemented to smooth out the rough edges and bring to an end the incoherent approaches existing between the different centres offering services to young people and adults with learning disabilities, which frequently generate discontinuities on the paths towards transition. Special emphasis should be placed on the case of centres offering services to young people and adults with learning disabilities in the post-school domain to construct highly coordinated local service networks that, rather than compete with one another,

collaborate to offer the different and varied alternatives requested by people with learning disabilities. To achieve this, a clear political commitment is required to reduce inequalities in the support currently offered to the different services aimed at adults with learning disabilities and to contribute to strengthening collaboration between them.

Reducing the discrepancies and discontinuities existing in scenarios related to transition requires both commitment and action when it comes to educational and social policies, and a change in attitude among professionals and services. With regard to this, one of the most important goals for the future to improve opportunities in transition is the transformation of the role played by professionals in different areas of social education throughout the transition process. Creating a form of education focused on transition entails redirecting the current focus on academic content to work on social and personal skills, thereby developing skills which lead to self-determination, and also reconsidering the relationships of power in educational processes to construct an equal relationship in which the voice of the pupil must be heard and respected. This constitutes a change of vision radically different from action relating to the social education of people with learning disabilities implemented until now. It is therefore necessary to reconsider and coordinate training actions aimed at different professionals involved in social education processes throughout the transition process, affecting those theoretical and reflective aspects that contribute to constructing an educational relationship in which the protagonism of the person with learning disabilities is fully recognised.

There can be no doubt that, with the diversity of scenarios, professionals and agents involved, transition constitutes one of the most complex challenges to be addressed from a social education viewpoint. However, despite the situations detected in Spain requiring actions for improvement, diverse signs do exist that the construction of bridges to facilitate transition has begun in earnest: consolidation of the employment

with support system, which is perceived as a powerful alternative in favouring integration in the workplace; the progressive tendency to open specific services to the community; changes in the initial training of secondary school teachers, which will provide them with the training to respond to young people's needs; the progressive increase in the number of studies focusing on methodologies that foster the processes of inclusion at school and therefore the growing professional concern to improve post-school inclusive processes. The above are some of the indicators of a new scenario that, although with some difficulties, is gradually gaining ground. They are signs of the necessary change in attitude among professionals if we are to genuinely improve transition to adulthood and working life from a truly inclusive perspective.

Along with these elements, it is also necessary to conduct contextualised studies to analyse transition scenarios which, from the perspective of collaboration between the professionals involved and counting on the active participation of people with learning disabilities, contribute relevant information on how to foster satisfactory and inclusive paths to transition. The complete involvement of people with learning disabilities in these processes is fundamental in guiding social education and employment actions to fully focus on the needs, desires and expectations of the main actors in the transition process.

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