The involvement of employers/companies in the process

of Post-Scholar Life Transition (TVA)

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Outubro, 2020

SUMMARY

This text reflects on the importance of developing a process of preparation for the socio-professional integration of young people with intellectual disabilities (ID) and other limitations during school attendance.

The work presented is an investigation based on the action/work previously developed by ASSOL in creating partnerships with employers, trying to understand their motivations, fears and the gains they may have from this collaboration.

The theoretical discussion around the concepts of socio-professional inclusion is based on two authors who have exerted great influence on ASSOL's philosophy and decisions over the years: Professors Ad Van Gennep of the University of Amsterdam, and Lou Brown of the University of Madison, Wisconsin USA, who was one of the pioneers of school transition programs to adulthood, by implementing traineeships in actual work contexts.

The research work carried includes two questionnaires, one applied to 182 employers collaborating with ASSOL, answered by entities; the other surveyed 16 professionals, whose task is to support the relationship between employers and the people served. These professionals work in different programs, namely: Post-Scholar Life Transition, Vocational Training, Supported Employment and Occupational Activities, all of these involving experiences in real work contexts.

The main conclusion of this research is that employers are open to receiving people with disabilities, namely young students to perform training activities in a real work context and they recognize that this cooperation brings gains for their organization and for the person.

The most mentioned condition, by the employers, for the success of these processes is the existence of a close and available support.

The diversity in size and sector of activity of employers is also interesting and it seems that all activities or organizations can welcome students with some kind or level of disability.

Index

Frame index

Index of tables

PART I - TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT AND WORK-LIFE

The first part presents the concepts and pedagogical methodologies that ASSOL considers essential to understand the goals and the process of the transition from school to adult and work life.

We describe ASSOL's work experience involving the partnerships with employers, as well as some methodologies used in the transition process in secondary education.

The second part analyses the questionnaires and it's possible conclusions.

1. WHO IS ASSOL AND WHY IS ENVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?

ASSOL is a nonprofit organization based in Oliveira de Frades, with intervention in several municipalities of the Intermunicipal Community of Viseu Dão-Lafões, whose mission is to promote social inclusion of people with disabilities and people with chronic and disabling mental illness.

ASSOL depends mainly on public funds but also on the cooperation of partnerships with employers. We could not do our work without public funds, but without the partnerships with companies, we could not achieve the same level of quality and efficiency.

This engagement began in a natural way, step by step.

The following table shows how the partnership became indispensable in different programs.

Quadro 1. Partnerships in different programs

Service	Partnerships with Employers
Resource Centre for School and Inclusion (CRI) - Students having a Transition Program	44 students are doing small internships in real work contexts
Vocational Training	All of 180 trainees do their practicing in real work contexts
Employment Resource Center	128 people are in support employment programs, working in regular work sites
Occupational Activity Center for disabled adults	About 75 (of 86) people are doing some activities in regular work sites
USO (Day care for adult people with mental illness)	About 25 (of 45) people are doing some activities in regular work sites
Community Support Program Offices (GAPRIC)	All of 32 supported people do some activities in regular work sites

The table below shows the number of active partnerships (with formal protocol) in each year, as well as the rate of renewal of these protocols.

Quadro 2. Number of active partnerships in each year

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total number of partnerships	354	367	353	427	430
Renewal rate of partnership protocols	99,5%	96,4%	96,6%	98,4%	97,56

We take on as a prior assumption that it is not possible for students to experience a good transition from school to the work context without having an effective experience in this world, but we never studied this problem from the point of view of employers.

We can contribute to Hilives Project studying the motivations, fears and needs of these partners. This analysis also helps us organize the necessary support to maintain a productive and positive long-term collaboration.

2. INCLUSION: CONCEPTS AND SCOPES

According to Ad Van Gennep (2019) existential co-inclusion recognizes disability and instead of trying to change it, inclusion does change the status of the individual in the community.

This concept calls for the enlargement and variability of ways of human interaction, which is a permanent and endless task and It requires a constant dialogue with people who are "different" and to whom it is "allowed" to continue to be different.

This concept assumes the *diversity* of human beings; we are all equal because we are human beings, but we are so special that every human being differs from all the others. Therefore, each of us is a unique human being. *Equality* is not innate, but rather the result of a social evolution that has equated human beings who differ from each other in a structural and unalterable way. This concept of co existential 'inclusion' needs to be the main foundation for social and pedagogical action to make inclusion a reality.

Inclusion in school, workplaces or in the community can only happen if people are there. Only being present can evolve into a sense of belonging and only established this feeling is it possible to participate in conditions of equity and with dignity.

Unfortunately, the system of supports leads to situations where people with disabilities are, too often, confined to situations where they only interact with other people with disabilities and with people who are paid to relate to them.

Lou Brown (2016) insists on the idea that valuable relationships are the ones we maintain with people who are not paid for it.

A central task for professionals who support people with disabilities at any age, but particularly in school ages is to promote the development of these support networks given by non-professionals, which are essential for:

- Increasing the chances of people with intellectual disabilities to experience a sense of "social belonging" due to increased opportunities to establish meaningful relationships with others in the community.
- Increasing the capacity of the general population to include people with intellectual disabilities in common life.

In fact, inclusion is always inclusion in a social network, which can be defined as a dynamic network of relationships that are important in the daily life of the person.

When a member of the social network supports a person with intellectual disabilities so that they can perform the activities of their choice, it can be a step towards inclusion.

The concept of co-existential inclusion is based on the affirmation of the individuality of the person. The inclusion should not transform the person, but it gives new forms to the person's life through the interactions established (Ad Van Gennep, 2019).

3. INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT A CONDITION FOR INDIVIDUAL DIGNITY AND FREEDOM

Having a job and making the money needed to meet our personal needs is, in our Western society, a mandatory condition to be recognized as a citizen.

"What is your job? What do you do for a living?" are main questions in the personal presentation of every adult person.

Our experience, with adult people with ID or with mental illness, shows that when they are asked about what their biggest dream is, the most frequent answer is: having a job.

Although, in some Western countries, people with disabilities benefit from good economical support that allows them access to decent living conditions, it does not have the same social dignity or significance as the money obtained by a paid job.

To have a job is a condition to have access to a life with personal freedom. Not having a job leads to poverty, but also contributes to reducing the opportunities for access to diverse social contacts.

Worldwide, the unemployment of people with disabilities constitutes a very negative and concerning reality. In Portugal the data are not reliable, but the Censuses 2001 (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2002) report that in Portugal about 6% of the population has some type

of disability and that of this universe only 26% work, that is, 74% of the population with some type of disability has no work. According to the 2019 report "Human Rights Indicators", by the Disability and Human Rights Observatory, in 2018, of all the unemployed people registered, 3.85% had disability.

On the other hand, there are studies in Western countries that point to unemployment rates around 90%.

This means that adult people with disabilities are living into poverty and social exclusion.

It seems clear that secondary school is failing to prepare students for the employment market. The big question is what is or should be the school's role in this process.

It would not be acceptable for our schools to completely fail in preparing the best students to access higher education. Our dream is that, one day, we will see society showing the same concern towards school failure in preparing students with ID to get a job when they finish school.

Certainly, this situation is related with the functioning of the school and with the teaching options that are made throughout the school years, but it highlights the importance of taking care of the preparation of young people for this change in their lives.

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Lou Brown was a pioneer in the study of the importance of preparing students for work and defines it as follows: "Preparation for work consists of ensuring that students with disabilities are provided with experiences, skills, work ethics, attitudes, values and everything that is necessary for their training so that at school, they can perform work in real situations and activities, according to standards minimally acceptable by employers" (Lou Brown, 2016).

The employment depends not only on school, but also on many other after-school policies. But although we have no scientific evidence, we can assume that what happens in school has repercussions on post-school policies and the way society looks at this problem.

The school's role is critical as an accelerator of change. In Portugal it can be said that inclusive education has been established in the 1980 decade, but only in 2015 would legislation be published that gives the same support to open market-supported employment to those who existed for sheltered employment.

This change cannot be dissociated from the fact that only now there are a large number of young people finishing "integrated" education.

The argument that it is not up to the school to prepare young people for the labor market is fragile and does not resist criticism.

Just as high schools assume that their job is to prepare good students to go to university, they should also be concerned about preparing other students for what comes next in their lives: an adult and work life.

The central challenge must be teaching knowledge and experiences that the person will need to use in their adult life.

Professor Lou Brown (2016) tells the story of a farmer to whom he tried to explain that his son with ID would learn much less than between 98%/99% of students. After some dialogue, the father said: "If my son will learn less than the other children, please teach him the most important things he needs to have a decent life in our community."

Thus, the school should integrate into the "curriculum", specifically in each student Individual Program, learning objectives directly related to the skills necessary to carry out a job, which involves learning in the contexts in which they will be necessary.

Lou Brown (2014) introduces two interesting concepts: "authentic assessment" and "authentic instruction" and defines them as follows:

- **Authentic assessment** consists of placing a person in a real-life situation, activity or context and then determining the significant discrepancies between what person expresses and the requirements for minimally acceptable functioning.
- **Authentic instruction** consists of teaching the necessary skills for meaningful participation in important situations, activities and contexts.

Leaving the physical space of traditional classrooms is still a big issue, for schools.

Our education system, traditionally, doesn't attribute the same value at the work done inside or outside the classroom. In our experience, it has happened, more than once, when we teach students outside school, in community sites, to be asked if we are just walking around. Worse than that, is if you are seen at a cafe or restaurant with your students.

Even in vocational training programs for people with disabilities, the trainer of the sessions in the classroom or workshop needs to have an special accreditation, but this is not required to the trainers who follow up the practical internships in real work situations. This shows that the value or importance given to the two parts of vocational training is not equal.

ASSOL became involved in transition plans from school to adult live due this prejudice. Special education teachers consider they have more important activities than to go to a company to prepare or monitor an internship of a student and school doesn't have the resources to pay for the needed travel.

Therefore, the support we provide to schools includes the planification, monitorization e control of the internships outside school.

When we teach in real life situations, one of the many problems raised is that it's not possible to learn by trial and error, which is a very common teaching strategy inside classroom and in traditional school contexts.

When we teach in real life situations, we have to use strategies that avoid error, because a single mistake can very problematic.

If we teach a young man how to peel potatoes, we cannot allow him to cut himself with the knife. If we teach a person how to iron, we cannot allow him to ruin his clothes. Even more dramatic cases can happen if we teach a person to cross a street, in which a single mistake can be fatal.

Since students cannot learn by trial and error, it is necessary to use strategies that:
- Give the necessary support for the student to perform the activity without error;
- Organize the activities in such a way that facilitates their implementation;
- Work the environment so that it provides the necessary allude in a natural way.

5. TRANSITION (TVA) AND ACTIVE LEARNING

The Transition from school to adult live (TVA) process must take into account the theories and learning models, while meeting the specificity and individuality of each student in their learning process.

In this context we highlight some of the characteristics of students with ID and their impact on learning (Lou Brown, 2016):
- They learn a smaller number of skills;
- They need a greater amount of attempts and more time to carry out an apprenticeship;
- They forget faster and have greater difficulties in the recovery process;
- They have difficulties in generalizing and transferring knowledge;
- They present greater difficulties in complex activities;
- They have greater synthesis difficulties.

Since the 1970s, people with intellectual disabilities, especially children and young people, have ceased to be seen as sick and incapable of learning, and started to be seen as pupils with skills to learn and develop.

The second change took place in the 1990s when AAIDD review the definition of mental disability saying that it is, firstly, a social problem and, therefore, the solution of this problem has to occur within the community in which the person lives. The person with an intellectual

disability must have the support to enable him to position himself as a citizen in society, despite his shortcomings.

A change that also relies on the definition of ID is that learning in contexts has become a right and not a kindness that we choose to give.

From this understanding follows that the main desired result of support is a better quality of live, namely: increasing environmental characteristics such as community presence, choice, competence, respect and community participation.

Tradition says that the person needs to be prepared in advance to be able to access a certain situation of life or work. From the moment we recognize as the objective of the support increase participation in the community, the issue is no longer the prior preparation but the support we give so that the person can function properly in these contexts.

The intention is to admit the person in the situation, let her learn from the experiences of this situation and provide the necessary support if the person does not have sufficient knowledge, skills or relationships.

Support should be given in a flexible way: not all people need the same intensity of support, nor support in all areas; in addition, support can and should be gradually reduced.

The support given helps enabling friendships, financial planning, employment support, behavioral support, support in independent home life, access to the community, assistance in the disease, etc...

It should be assumed that support is not the exclusive function of professionals and support activities can and may be carried out by people in the social network, who are assisted, only when necessary by professionals.

Support is also not limited to the areas of any school curriculum, it shall be provided in all areas of a person's life.

What we do with and for disabled people can be considered a support if and when it increases the opportunities for integration and participation and enlarges their personal freedom.

If that doesn´t happen, we need to question if our work is being helpful to this person.

In short, education must support personal development as a part of the process that allows you to shape and give content to your independent life, according to your basic needs. When we do this under normal living circumstances and according to normal living standards, in such a way that these are achieved, then we support the person's quality of life.

The amount, intensity and withdrawal of support are very important points.

People can fail because adequate support is not given for as long as necessary. We need to realize that individuals may need or re-need different types and intensities of support. Too little is bad, but too much is not good either. Balance is the constant challenge.

5.1. Active learning

Active learning provides a greater possibility of developing skills, since, through multisensory stimulation, it allows a greater capacity for acquiring and mobilizing knowledge.

Thus, the TVA process promotes this learning in contexts through the development of practical internships in real work context.

The success of the TVA processes, training and professional integration depends on the motivation and commitment of the person served, but also on the involvement of technicians and awareness and openness of the business fabric. The integration of people with disabilities into training must take into account their interests and needs as well as the labor market.

The practice of ASSOL has been corroborating the principles of active and cooperative learning to the extent that real experiences in the context of work show the following:

a) **provide opportunities that can facilitate:**
- a growing satisfaction with his/her own life;
- a feeling of love, affection and belonging that comes from loving relationships;
- a sense of security that stems from the ability to decide their actions and control over the environment itself;
- opportunities for choice and control.

b) **Provide well-being, where the important factors are:**
- physical: health and personal safety;
- materials: material comfort and financial security;
- social activities: civic and community activities;
- intellectual stimulation: work that is useful, interesting and rewarding;
- leisure and recreation in a perspective of obtaining pleasure.

c) **promote stability, predictability and control.**

The environment stability is an important condition, but at the same time there must be variability in the intensity of the supports. Having opportunities, well-being and stability certainly contributes to improving the functioning of the person. The better the functioning of

the person in his community, the greater the recognition of the quality of the person as a citizen who is equal to others in society.

5.2. Training in natural workplaces

The presence and the participation of the student in a workplace implies the learning of a huge repertoire of behaviors, mostly in an informal way, that go far beyond the skills of performing tasks.

In the questionnaire given to employers, we found curious that one of their strongest motivations is: "The challenge of helping someone to develop as a person and as a worker", what reinforces the importance of these informal learnings and many of them related to moral values.

a) The learning of global working capacities and the generalization of those capacities

In "*The Own Initiative Model*" Timmer and De Vries (2014) say that "practical experiences in a real work context, in the open market" is a good model for this preparation by increasing learning general skills: guidance (ability to think about the things needed to draw up and design a plan); implementation (ability to think about what is done) and evaluation (ability to verify whether goals are achieved, learning from and through).

b) The learning of specific working techniques

The employers don't have the expertise or the obligation to welcome our students. So this work requires the support of a professional, to prepare for integration into a workplace in a normal working environment.

This professional support has a broad range of points, namely:
- **Assessment** of the personality, abilities and desires of the person served, concerning work.
- **Support for job placement:** the analysis of the job, the context, and strategies that enhance both the environment and the person's work and adaptability.
- **Support and training in the workplace**: training, with the support of a professional, to improve the performance in specific tasks based on a support plan.
- **Post-placement support** - long-term follow-up and support to facilitate the process of maintaining previously acquired capacities. Once the supported worker demonstrates that he or she is gaining and improving the professional skills, the support technician begins to spend less time with him in the workplace, reducing his presence during periods when the worker can perform his tasks autonomously. This progressive

decrease in support will continue until the worker demonstrates the ability to perform tasks in the workplace on his own. During this time, the professional will work closely with the worker's supervisor and, if appropriate, also with co-workers in the sense that they assume responsibility and supervision – moving from technical support to natural and community support.

- **Natural support in the community:** the principle of equal rights implies that the needs of each person are equally important. These needs should be the starting point for the way in which the community is organized and implies that all means available in the community are used in such a way that all people have equal opportunities for participation (inclusion).

5.3. Support for the exercise of citizenship

Support should promote quality of life improvement, resulting in greater autonomy, participation and inclusion. The person does not need to fulfill a certain condition to be allowed to participate in a given activity or situation. Support must be flexible and we must constantly assess whether adjusts are needed. The social network of the person plays a major role in this support.

Being an equal citizen does not require that the person with ID functions at a certain level. In fact, it means the need for society to respect human dignity by giving all its members an equal status. Considering this statute, members of society with biopsychosocial limitations are entitled to all the support they need. Respect for and protection of human dignity implies treating people with intellectual disabilities with dignity and assuming that they have the right to a dignified life.

The focus is placed on the difference, uniqueness, the sense that everyone is irreplaceable and different. However, people also have something in common: all people have the same dignity, but each one differs from another in a permanent and fundamental way. Social dignity leads to the appreciation of the person as a member of the community who belongs to it. (Ad Van Gennep, 2019)

6. WITHOUT A CURRICULUM WHAT CAN WE DO?

In this transition process the standard is the individualization.

If the standard is not to have a standard, this can create a feeling of insecurity within the professionals involved.

Teaching without a curriculum also poses great challenges to teachers and other professionals, in programs such as vocational training and, at the limit, even working with adults with very serious disabilities.

In fact, if there are no curricula or reference standards, professionals can feel insecure.

More than helping a person to fulfill a curriculum, the challenge is to make an Individual Program that fills the aspirations, motivations, needs and dreams of each person.

In the absence of collective standards, the guidelines in decision-making process, which can dramatically affect a person's life, mainly have a moral nature.

Without patterns to follow and without a reference that tells us what is right or wrong, the moral dilemmas will be a constant. In this process is also common to state that what is good for one person and much desired by him/her, can be harmful to another.

Hence the importance of a clear understanding of the moral values, it is necessary to use pedagogical techniques aligned with these values.

When we teach, there are two important questions: What to teach and why?

To decide the "what" can be easy if we have a curriculum or program to follow.

Without this curriculum we can only answer the question **what** if answering the question **why**:

Lou Brown (2016) proposes a list of "Good whys", that we reproduce because it seems to us a good list of commandments for professional's:

- It is Chronological-Age-Appropriate;
- It is functional: it will reduce demands made on others;
- It is a student preference: he/she asked that I help him/her learn it;
- It is a clearly expressed parent/guardian preference;
- It is a justifiable professional preference;
- It will increase the number of environments and activities experienced;
- It will increase his/her social relationship range;
- It will enhance physical status, appearance and stamina;
- There is a reasonable chance he/she can learn it;
- There are reasonable transfer, practice and natural supervision opportunities;
- It will help generate curricular balance;
- It is important vocationally;
- It enhances privacy, choices, respect, pride and social status;
- It will reduce government involvement in his/her life;
- It will increase expectations;
- It will enhance feelings of belonging and connectedness;

- It is logistically feasible;

- Research results of acceptable quality support teaching it;

- When parents see them do it, tears will run down their cheeks.

6.1. Person Centred Planning

Person Centred Planning is an approach developed in the 1980 and 1990 decades, conceived to promote social inclusion of long-term institutionalized people.

This approach allows us to design Educational Programs, namely transition programs, aligned with the expectations, hopes and dreams of the person served and their social network.

The center is the person rather than their limitations. The importance is given to what the people want for their future.

The clinical diagnosis and the difficulties that the person may have are placed on a secondary level. The focus are the preferences, desires and dreams of each served person.

In this methodology life is seen as a journey, in which our goals adjust as we walk. The important thing is the path that we have ahead, not what has already been left behind.

Being aware of the desires, interests, motivations and direction that the person wants to take for his/her life, gives us the ability to negotiate with them and define a set of coherent supports aligned with their life project.

Person-Centred Planning helps to raise awareness of the desired future of and for the person served and their community. In addition, it gives us tools to plan actions towards this desired future, namely PATH (Pearpoint, O'Brien & Forest, 1993) and MAPA (Falvey et al., 1997). Nevertheless, the main tools are:

Listening and dialogue to make sure that we correctly understand the direction that people want to take and what are the choices that they are able to make presently.

This understanding is necessary so that we can adjust the support according to the person's desires. Support negotiation is the tool needed to achieve this adjustment.

The people served participation in the planning process is indispensable, as well as their family, friends and social network. It is very important that the caregivers directly involved also participate in the planning.

Concerning this methodology, ASSOL has translated and edited two books in Portugal:

- PATH: Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (2009);

- All my life's a circle (2011).

This approach and its tools are very useful when we help a person or a family to think about a future with hope. It is this vision of future that gives a direction to the person's life and allows us to organize the necessary and possible support.

7. TRANSITION FROM HIGH EDUCATION TO POST SCHOOL LIVE: OUR EXPERIENCE

An Individual Transition Plan (PIT) is designed for students who benefit from the most restrictive curriculum adaptations. According to our legislation, students must begin a transition process three years before the term of compulsory schooling, i.e. 15 year-old students and/or at the beginning of the first three years of high school/secondary education (Ferreira & Pereira, 2015).

Through the Resource Centre for School and Inclusion (CRI), ASSOL has a history of about 25 years of cooperation with 8 high schools in Post-Scholar Transition (TVA) for students with the most restrictive curriculum adaptations.

Along this time some frustrations took place, but we also experienced many very good situations, that stimulates us to move on.

Experience shows that there is a great availability of employers what allows us to find internship locations for all students who want it, and almost always in the areas of their preference.

Geographical conditions are limiting the range of activities that student can choose to do in their internships because their location must be very near to the school. Most of the times the students must go on foot, because we do not have an available net of transportations.

One of the great difficulties posed is that these stages are seen as a secondary activity of the Individual Educational Program.

Still too often the internship is seen as a way to occupy a student in the hours in which the school has difficulty finding him activities.

The importance of preparing these people for post-school life is not rooted in the school's culture, which makes it difficult for these internships to last longer, according to the student's and company's wants and needs.

Lou Brown (2016) mentions that in the last year of schooling these internships should be occupy half of school hours. In our reality it has been difficult to achieve more than two afternoons or two mornings because academic activities are given precedence, including support by "special education" teachers.

Despite the difficulties, it has been possible to take steps in what we think is the right direction, but it is important to ensure:

a) **A link between the Individual Transition Plan (PIT) and the Educational Program**

Transition should be a continuous process of student development, which means performing activities to promote autonomy and various personal and essential skills throughout their school path, which are essential in environments outside school.

Is mandatory in our legislation to ensure that the PIT remains a component of the PEI and not an autonomous and disconnected instrument. The transition technician must work in close coordination with school so that all the work can be properly framed in the document that discriminates the curriculum adaptations (PEI) and linked to the work of their class and special education teachers, always accepting the principle that school is the entity that is responsible for the student's educational process (Ferreira & Pereira, 2015).

b) **That student must make a well-informed choice**

The process of choosing the internship workplace is conditioned by the will of the student, but also by external factors, such as the availability of the chosen company, as well as the proximity or existence of compatible transportations.

To identify and respect the wishes and dreams of the students, but also the expectations of the family, it is necessary to set up a network of support that can involve the use of all kinds of natural support existing in the community, and even more specific support to be ensured by the family, involving them actively.

The process of sensitization of the internship site implies a flexibility for the technicians to be able to adjust to the schedules and availability of companies, which is not always easy for teachers due to the rigidity of school schedules. However, the flexibility and willingness to support whenever necessary is still a crucial factor in the success of this process.

c) **Practical aspects: stages of the process, negotiation, mediation, working in partnership**

The transition process (TVA) involves several steps that we have described synthetically (Ferreira & Pereira, 2015).

1. **Vocational Screening:** the central element is the dialogue with students and their families, as well as visits to different companies and community services. The student needs to be properly informed in order to make choices. These visits can be more open (when the student does not have a preference area yet) or more directed (when the student already has some idea of what he wants).

2. **Negotiation of the internship**: Involving the student, the school and the company.

3. **Search for internship locations:** The search for the right place for every student according its interest and possibilities.

4. **Preparation of the PIT**: The process only begins when all the actors - school, student and family – reach a common understanding. In this stage the location of the internship is defined, the tasks to be performed are decided, as well as the schedules, transportation to the place and the responsibilities of each part.

5. For each internship, a list of tasks that the student can perform is organized, which, in practice, functions as the curriculum of the activity, in addition to serving as a guide for all elements involved.

6. It is important for the TVA technician to have some knowledge of task analysis in order to be able to identify tasks which are accessible to the student and help establish learning objectives tailored to the students' abilities and motivations. This issue is essential so that the student is not stuck with the routine performance of some too simple tasks, and to prevent that, on the contrary, the student is continuously faced with requirements that exceed his abilities, which generates frustration and withdrawal from the task. Maintaining high motivational levels in the student is critical to a successful TVA process.

7. **Introducing the student to company:** We must be careful with aspects like the presentation of the student to the company and the written protocol.

8. **Monitoring of the internship:** The technician should adjust the frequency of the visits according to each situation, balancing his presence so it is not understood as inaccessible or distant and, on the other hand, avoid that it is felt as bothersome.

9. The follow-up aims to help solve logistical problems, mediate situations that may arise, plan the learning and their continuous and periodic evaluation and articulate with the school.

10. **Transmission of information between the company and the school**: School must be aware of the whole process, so the TVA professional transmits the relevant information about the internship to the teachers and informs internship workplace about the relevant subjects involving the student (Ferreira & Pereira, 2015).

The process includes also:

- Evaluation at the end of school periods;
- The student Self-assessment;
- Assessment of family satisfaction;
- Student evaluation by the company/entity (Ferreira & Pereira, 2015).

PART II - COLLABORATION OF EMPLOYERS
Availability, Motivations, Fears and Conditions

Part II of this study aims to process the data obtained through the questionnaires applied both to employers who welcome supported people and ASSOL employees who mediate and provide support to employers.

1. EMPLOYERS QUESTIONNAIRE

The employer's questionnaire was specifically designed for the present study and consists of three essential parts. The first part allows the characterization of employers at the socio-demographic level and the scope of their collaboration with ASSOL. The second part seeks to acknowledge the appreciation that employers make of their motivations, fears and conditions. The third and final part, evaluated through an open question, wants to know the opinion of employers on the integration of people with disabilities in the working world.

1.2. Methodology for processing and data analysis

For the data analysis related to the employers' questionnaire, descriptive analysis was used, which is based on a study of non-uniform characteristics of the units observed or experienced. It is used to describe the data through statistics, so in the present study we used the absolute (n) and relative (%) measures of central tendency and dispersion as is the case of the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), whenever necessary (Pestana & Gageiro, 2014).

From question 3, the subjects answered each statement on a *Likert scale* ranging from 1 (nothing important) to 5 (totally important). Since the classifications proved to be very similar, not allowing to show very clear differences between the importance of the factors, it was understood to complete the analysis by creating a scoring system of the various answers, which allowed to perceive some interesting differences to be underlined.

In view of the above, the answers are presented either by distributing the number of responses, with their percentage at each level of the scale, or by ordering the factors hierarchically. We took the liberty to carry out an operation which consists of multiplying the level of the scale (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) by the number of recorded responses and make the respective sum. This score, not having a special meaning, because it keeps very balanced scores, allows an easier reading and also evidences some nuances. The factors in each of the tables are already in an orderly manner, according to this weighted score.

2. SAMPLE AND AVAILABILITY

The questionnaire was sent to 272 employers who have established cooperation protocols with ASSOL to integrate people with disabilities into their activities.

A total of 182 entities answered, and it was found that:

- 136 (74.7%) are private entities, 19 (10.4%) are IPSS/NGO and 27 (14.8%) public sector/municipalities;
- These 182 entities are distributed in 41 different fields of economic activity;
- These entities employ an average of 28 workers;
- Each entity welcomes, on average, one person with disability;
- 50% of entities have been collaborating with ASSOL for more than 5 years (Table 1).

These data lead to the conclusion that all types of entities and all types of economic activities have the potential to accommodate people with disability and/or some level of incapacity.

Also, because they constitute the majority of people supported by ASSOL, there is a predominance of employers who host trainees in vocational training (60.4%), soon followed by the small internships carried out in the context of the post-scholar life transition (30.8%) (Table 2).

It is also possible to infer that once the cooperation is established it tends to continue, since only 22.5% of the entities have been collaborating for a year or less.

It is stressed that employers are located in the area of the CIM (Intermunicipal Community Viseu Dão Lafões), a region marked by interiority, in which economic activity is very unequal between the different municipalities. According to the study on the "Poder de Compra Concelhio - 2017" (National Institute of Statistics, 2017), the Viseu Dão-Lafões region has a *per capita* purchasing power of 80.4% of the national average, and it is verified that in some municipalities this value stands between 60 and 65%.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characterization

	N	%	Average	DP	Range
Entity					
Company	136	74.7			
IPSS/ONG	19	10.4			
Municipality/public sector	27	14.8			
Nº of workers	133	----	28.56	70.36	01 - 600
Years collaborating with ASSOL					
About 1 year	41	22.5			
More than 2 years	49	26.9			
More than 5 years	37	20.3			
More than 10 years	22	12.1			
More than 15 years	20	11			
More than 20 years	13	7.1			
Nº of people with disabilities welcomes entity	177	----	1.59	1.55	0-10

Table 2. Scope of collaboration with ASSOL

		Yes	No
Transition to Pos-Scholar Life Internships	n	56	126
	%	30.8	69.2
Vocational Training	n	110	72
	%	60.4	39.6
Internships or integration contracts	n	46	136
	%	25.3	74.7
Supported employment	n	22	160
	%	12.1	87.9
Socio-professional experiences	n	46	136
	%	25.3	74.7

3. MOTIVATIONS

In this issue we sought to know the motivations of entrepreneurs for the maintenance of partnerships and not so much the initial motivations, because often the involvement began with some persistence and insistence of the ASSOL workers. The sample ensures that the motivations result from a lived experience.

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage of the responses, with an identical importance for almost all factors. Nevertheless, it can be emphasized that entrepreneurs were unanimous in their opinion, mentioning the variables as totally important: *"ASSOL ensures support whenever there is some difficulty*" (59.9%), "*It is a way to help those who need it"* (57.7%), *"The challenge of helping someone to develop as a person and as a worker*" (56%). For entrepreneurs, the factors *"Some people with disabilities, due to their enthusiasm for life, are a source of inspiration"* (36.3%) and *"Their presence gives a positive image of the organization"* (30.8%), were considered very important in maintaining the partnership.

Through the weighted score that we had the audacity to perform, it is possible to hierarchize, more clearly, the factors by the level of importance that they reveal to entrepreneurs. Thus, it is perceived that the two statements with the highest weighted score are of a moral, personal and social responsibility nature and the third is the confidence of the support provided by ASSOL. It should be stressed that the importance of the work performed appears only in seventh place (in eight possibilities), which makes it possible to assume that the access of employers is not dependent on the work capacities of the person.

Table 3. Factors that led to maintaining a partnership with ASSOL

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**WS**	**NR**[*]
The challenge of helping someone develop as a person and as a worker.	n	--	--	18	54	102	780	8
	%	--	--	9.9	29.7	56		4.4
It's a way for us to help those in need.	n	1	--	20	46	105	770	10
	%	0.5	--	11	25.3	57.7		5.5
ASSOL provides support whenever there is any difficulty.	n	--	--	21	41	109	754	11
	%	--	--	11.5	22.5	59.9		6
Some people with disabilities, because of their life enthusiasm, are a source of inspiration.	n	--	8	44	66	47	625	17
	%	--	4.4	24.2	36.3	25.8		9.3
Their presence gives a positive image of the organization.	n	4	14	47	56	40	597	21
	%	2.2	7.7	25.8	30.8	22		11.5
The person served creates a good work environment.	n	--	15	55	55	36	595	21
	%	--	8.2	30.2	30.2	19.8		11.5
The work that people do.	n	8	11	67	44	34	586	18
	%	4.4	6	36.8	24.2	18.7		9.9
The coexistence among employees, in general, has improved.	n	5	17	61	57	20	550	22
	%	2.7	9.3	33.5	31.3	11		12.1

* 1 (unimportant) 2 (slightly important) 3 (important) 4 (very important) 5 (totally important) WS (weighted score) NR (nonrespondent)

Faced with the question *"what do people with disabilities who are welcomed in your entity gain?"*, entrepreneurs present consistency and coherency in their responses, thus, there is agreement at the level of importance (totally important) that they attribute to the following factors: "*They feel important because they have a job*" (61%), "*They are cherished by their colleagues*" (49.5%), "*They gain a place in society*" (48.4%), "*They are seen in a more positive way*" (45.6%), *"Work helps them stabilize their lives"* (44.5%) and *"There is always someone who becomes friends with them"* (44%) (Table 4).

Through the weighted score and the hierarchization of the factors by the level of importance they reveal to entrepreneurs, it is verified that the first three items with higher scores are directly related to the issue of inclusion in the community and society. Entrepreneurs consider that, being a support network, they extend the range of possibilities for people with intellectual disabilities to increase opportunities to establish meaningful relationships with others, develop feelings of social belonging, as well as allow the increase in the number of people who are committed to helping the success of the supported person. These results also

indicate that natural support in the community is based on the principle of equal rights, which implies that the needs of each person are of the same importance.

Once again, it is verified that the financial issue is the item that proves to be less important for entrepreneurs, being positioned at the end of the table (Table 4).

Table 4. Benefits that people with disabilities earn in entities

		1	2	3	4	5	WS	NR*
They feel important because they have a job.	n	--	--	18	47	111	797	6
	%	--	--	9.9	25.8	61		3.3
They are cherished by their colleagues.	n	--	--	24	59	90	758	9
	%	--	--	13.2	32.4	49.5		4.9
They find their place in society.	n	--	--	20	62	88	748	12
	%	--	--	11	34.1	48.4		6.6
Work helps them stabilize their lives.	n	--	1	23	65	81	736	12
	%	--	0.5	12.6	35.7	44.5		6.6
Their physical and mental health improved.	n	1	1	23	72	75	735	10
	%	0.5	0.5	12.6	39.6	41.2		5.5
They are now seen in a more positive way.	n	--	1	24	61	83	733	13
	%	--	0.5	13.2	33.5	45.6		7.1
There's always someone who becomes friends with them.	n	--	1	24	61	80	718	16
	%	--	0.5	13.2	33.5	44		8.8
Advice provided by coworkers helps them better solve everyday problems.	n	--	3	30	69	67	707	13
	%	--	1.6	16.5	37.9	36.8		7.1
They improved their behaviour.	n	--	5	23	68	71	706	15
	%	--	2.7	12.6	37.6	39		8.2
They can earn more money.	n	2	5	41	51	68	679	15
	%	1.1	2.7	22.5	28	37.4		8.2

* 1 (unimportant) 2 (slightly important) 3 (important) 4 (very important) 5 (totally important) WS (weighted score) NR (nonrespondent)

Entrepreneurs say that if they stopped receiving people with disabilities in their companies, they would lose someone who is important to them (56.1%) and that the environment would be sadder (39.5%). On the other hand, it becomes noticeable that people with disability are not considered a negative factor, because most totally disagree with the statement *"We would no longer have a concern"* (57.1%). These data are in line with the total scores obtained, which allowed verifying this same hierarchy at the level of the most and least important factors for entrepreneurs (Table 5).

Table 5. Consequences of not receiving people with disabilities in the company

		1	2	3	4	5	WS	NR*
We would lose someone who's important to us.	n	1	8	52	54	48	629	19
	%	0.5	4.4	28.6	29.7	26.4		10.4
The work environment would be sadder.	n	5	17	70	47	25	562	18
	%	2.7	9.3	38.5	25.8	13.7		9.9
We would lose someone who executes indispensable tasks.	n	24	31	56	27	9	407	35
	%	13.2	17	30.8	14.8	4.9		19.2
Loss of productivity.	n	33	37	60	13	3	354	36
	%	18.1	20.3	33	7.1	1.6		19.8
We wouldn't have a concern anymore.	n	57	47	33	10	5	315	30
	%	31.3	25.8	18.1	5.5	2.7		16.5

* 1 (unimportant) 2 (slightly important) 3 (important) 4 (very important) 5 (totally important) WS (weighted score) NR (nonrespondent)

4. FEARS

When analyzing the answers concerning the question related to the fears that entrepreneurs had before starting the experiment, it is verified that the most frequent mentioned factors are directly related to psychological well-being and physical integrity, namely *"Hurting themselves"* (46.7%) *and "Not adapting"* (44.5%) (Table 6). On the other hand, it is possible to verify, by ordering the factors, that those that reveal themselves with a level of lesser importance for entrepreneurs are those that relate to the issues of discrimination and the possibility of some kind of injury, in the sense that the supported people could spoil machines or materials. Perhaps, due to the experience that entrepreneurs have with ASSOL, these results may be a reflection of the confidence placed in the work that has been carried out over time, in the way that the company forms and adjusts the profile of the subject to the functions to be performed, with the monitoring technicians being the facilitating agents. It is a process of choosing and preparing the "right person for the right place", seeking the balance between the demands of the job and the person profile, who as a worker can effectively perform his function in a post that justifies the place he occupies.

As for the issues of non-discrimination, it is believed that the change of mentalities was made by the multiplication of successful experiences.

Table 6. Fears mentioned before starting the experiment

		1	2	3	4	5	WS	NR*
That they didn't adapt to the workplace.	n	9	15	70	54	27	600	7
	%	4.9	8.2	38.5	29.7	14.8		3.8
That they would get hurt.	n	14	19	52	48	37	585	12
	%	7.7	10.4	28.6	26.4	20.3		6.6
That they needed a lot of help to complete the tasks.	n	9	35	67	40	17	525	14
	%	4.9	19.2	36.8	22	9.3		7.7
That they had aggressive moments or behaviors that we couldn't handle.	n	19	31	57	41	15	491	19
	%	10.4	17	31.3	22.5	8.2		10.4
That they would interfere with the colleague's work.	n	26	48	52	26	9	427	21
	%	14.3	26.4	28.6	14.3	4.9		11.5
That they would wreck machines and materials.	n	35	48	51	22	8	412	18
	%	19.2	26.4	28	12.1	4.4		9.9
That our workers wouldn't accept and help them.	n	43	31	42	31	11	410	24
	%	23.6	17	23.1	17	6		13.2
That the costumers wouldn't accept their presence.	n	49	38	43	22	8	382	22
	%	26.9	20.9	23.6	12.1	4.4		12.1

* 1 (unimportant) 2 (slightly important) 3 (important) 4 (very important) 5 (totally important) WS (weighted score) NR (nonrespondent)

5. CONDITIONS

Most entrepreneurs mention that in order to maintain the partnership it is essential that the person likes to be in the company (68.7%), that ASSOL support is always available (62.6%) and that co-workers get along well with supported people (52.2%). Although the financial support of the government represents some weight, a large portion of the sample devalues it (31.8%) (Table 7).

When analyzing the ordered factors by the weighted score obtained, it is verified that the most important condition still refers to the supported person liking the place of internship/work. At the same time, the factors related to ASSOL support also have a high degree of importance, because experience shows that this availability of support is essential to ensure a good mediation between the supported person and the employer. This follow-up has as main objective to help solve logistical problems, mediate situations that may arise, plan learning and their continuous and periodic evaluation and articulate with the school/company. In the hierarchical ordering of the factors, the financial issue still does not reveal a high level of importance, and entrepreneurs seem to value aspects related to the positive and wholesome emotional and personal development of supported people.

Of the 182 companies that answered the questionnaire, 114 collaborate with internships of TVA, professional training or socio-professional experiences for which there is no financial support from the government. Of the remaining 68 companies, 46 collaborate on contracts and traineeships of professional insertion in which there is relevant financial support and 22 have people employed, under the supported employment measures that has a financial component.

Table 7. Indispensable factors to maintain the partnership

		1	2	3	4	5	WS	NR*
That the person served enjoys being in the company.	n	--	--	12	40	125	821	5
	%	--	--	6.6	22	68.7		2.7
ASSOL´s support.	n	1	2	20	41	112	789	6
	%	0.5	1.1	11	22.5	61.5		3.3
That ASSOL's support is always available.	n	--	--	22	38	114	788	4.4
	%	--	--	12.1	20.9	62.6		4.4
That the coworkers get along with the person served.	n	--	--	21	53	95	750	13
	%	--	--	11.5	29.1	52.2		7.1
Government financial support.	n	24	11	23	40	62	585	22
	%	13.2	6	12.6	22	34.1		12.1

* 1 (unimportant) 2 (slightly important) 3 (important) 4 (very important) 5 (totally important) WS (weighted score) NR (nonrespondent)

In the entrepreneurs opinion, the participation of people with incapacity and/or disabilities in their entities helps to transform society. Therefore, for this transformation, entrepreneurs consider the factors: *"Working is better than living on subsidies"* (56%) and a greater awareness of its value (45.6%). Entrepreneurs classify as "very important" the following factors for the transformation of society: they get used to being and talking to different people (42.9%), one has a more positive view of them (40.7%), people are more receptive to welcome them (39.6%) and make an important contribution to the economy (34.6%) (Table 8).

When analyzing the data taking into account the weighted score, the previously mentioned pattern is verified, as well as the gain of awareness of the value of the supported people and the fact that they are working is better than living on subsidies, continue to reveal the factors that entrepreneurs consider most important in the transformation of society. This may allow us to conclude that there has been a progressive recognition of the disability and an increase in the ability to understand the inclusion term (Table 8).

Table 8. Opinion on the factors that help transform society with the participation of PDI in companies

		1	2	3	4	5	WS	NR*
We become aware of their value.	n	--	--	21	69	83	754	9
	%	--	--	11.5	37.9	45.6		4.9
Working is better than living off subsidies.	n	1	5	21	42	102	752	11
	%	0.5	2.7	11.5	23.1	56		6
We're more receptive to receive and support them.	n	1	--	28	72	70	723	11
	%	0.5	--	15.4	39.6	38.5		6
We have a more positive view of them.	n	--	--	25	74	69	716	14
	%	--	--	13.7	40.7	37.9		7.7
We get used to being and talking to different people.	n	1	--	22	78	62	689	19
	%	0.5	--	12.1	42.9	34.1		10.4
They make an important contribution to the economy.	n	1	7	37	63	60	678	14
	%	0.5	3.8	20.3	34.6	33		7.7
It has become more common to meet people with disabilities in several locations and under different circumstances.	n	--	3	38	64	57	661	20
	%	--	1.6	20.9	35.2	31.3		11

* 1 (unimportant) 2 (slightly important) 3 (important) 4 (very important) 5 (totally important) WS (weighted score) NR (nonrespondent)

6. OPINIONS ON THE INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES INTO THE WORKING WORLD

The last question, requesting an open answer, aimed to know the opinion of entrepreneurs, as a synthesis, regarding their opinion on the integration of people with disabilities in the working world. A total of 98 respondents answered.

The most frequent responses were that is an opportunity for professional and social integration, (9.9%), an added value/benefit for both parties (8.8%), there is personal and professional appreciation for people with disabilities (6.6%), promotes inclusion, integration in the labor market, economic independence and personal appreciation (4.9%), increases self-esteem and feeling of usefulness at work (4.9%) and it's a positive project for society (4.4%) (Table 9).

Table 9. Opinion on the integration of people with disabilities in the world of work

	n	*%*
It is an opportunity for professional and social integration	18	9.9
Added value/benefit for both parties	16	8.8
It is a personal and professional appreciation for the person with disabilities	12	6.6
Promotes inclusion and integration into the labor market, economic independence, personal appreciation	9	4.9
Increased self-esteem and feeling of usefulness in the work of people with disabilities.	9	4.9
Positive project for society	8	4.4
Integration as a form of equitable capacity building in the working world is important	5	2.7
They have an occupation	3	1.6
Support in the socio-professional and human use	3	1.6
Team interpersonal relationships are strengthened	3	1.6
There must be availability for the support	2	1.1
It is a factor minimizing segregation and discrimination issues	2	1.1
Integration allows people with disabilities to take responsibility and not be seen differently	2	1.1
One learns to deal with different people, but they are very useful	2	1.1
People have to show a willingness to be more needed in society	1	0.5
Creates opportunity for access to certified training with technical or superior equivalence	1	0.5
Integration in the public sector is not yet proper	1	0.5
Integration is a mission of solidarity, sharing and generosity	1	0.5
Nonrespondent	84	46.2
Total	182	100

7. ASSOL WORKERS QUESTIONNAIRE

The objective of this questionnaire is essentially to understand the nuances of the mediation process in the relationships between companies and people with disabilities. At the same time, this questionnaire also validates the responses of employers.

7.1. Sample

The questionnaire was answered by 16 ASSOL workers, whose role is to support people who perform activities in a real work context.

7.2. Methodology

The questionnaire consists of 14 open questions, where respondents were invited to answer each one appropriately.

The processing of the data is based on the counting of responses.

Given that there are different answers but with similar meaning, these were grouped, generating several categories.

The following tables show the most mentioned issues and categories

What reasons do you find more relevant when suggesting a given company to a person served?

Company environment, responsiveness and company sensitivity	9
Meeting the preference of the professional area	9
Characteristics, abilities and the person preferences	6
Meeting the dreams of the supported person	5

Which aspects do you take under consideration when first approaching the companies?

Sensitivity to "deal" with the supported person and/acceptance of the supported person	11
Willingness to listen to and understand the importance of including people with disabilities and the role of the company in this process	10
Availability to experience/receive and teach the supported person	6
Learning and personal development perspectives	6
Physical conditions, clarity in articulation and possibility for future employment	3

Which features does a company worker must demonstrate in order to become a reference for the person served?

Convey empathy, trust or security	16
Understanding the supported person's problems	8
Availability to teach/support the supported person	5
Acceptance and appreciation of the supported person	4
Social responsibility	2

Which strategies do you use to help create a bond between the person served and the company's liaison worker?

Valuing the characteristics, namely the strengths of the supported person	11
Create bridges by conveying trust, security and protection	9
Active listening, conversation and communication care	3
Active participation in receiving the person supported in the entity	2
Understanding and empathy towards the supported person	2
Make the person feel useful and valid for the community	1

What are the most frequent issues that you find in the initial steps of the integration process?

Difficulties in adapting to company rules and routines, by the supported person	9
Lack of understanding of the limitations of the supported people by co-workers and/or guardians.	8
Difficulties in linking and communicating between the company and the supported person	3
Lack of tasks for the supported person to perform (which results in demotivation)	3
Fears in adaptation, not being able to "do", lack of self-confidence of the supported person	2
Creating high expectations in relation to the profession	2
Limited range of companies in the region with willingness to collaborate	2

What kind of support do the companies most request from ASSOL?

Conflict management and support in interpersonal relationships	9
Personal issues (hygiene, initiative, emotion management)	7
Support in compliance with company rules, by the person supported	4
Support in communication between the supported person and the entity	4
Information on employment support measures	3

What kind of assistance does the person served most request from ASSOL?

Problem solving/personal life situations	11
Guidance for resolving workplace situations	5
Social support (e.g. filling out and interpreting documents for social support, follow-up consultations, bureaucratic issues for the funders)	4
Integration into the community, society	3
Personal protective equipment	2
Increase in the training grant	2

What kind of assistance do the people served's families most request from ASSOL?

Help with the future by calling for integration into the labor market	7
Social support (e.g. integration into one of ASSOL's social responses)	4
Conflict management	2
Community integration	2
Other	3

What kind of support do the person served's colleagues/company workers most request from ASSOL?

Support in problem solving, conflict management or compliance with rules (e.g. attendance, punctuality)	10
Suggestions for dealing with a particular situation/attitude/behaviour of the supported person	7
Support to build salutary interpersonal relationships	3
Collaborate in helping personal life situations	2

Which practices do you enforce to assure the person served's continuity in the company?

Continuous and close support, namely being present on the most vulnerable moments	7
Listening and observing their behaviour, to intervene whenever necessary and to prevent further issues	4
Enabling and helping the process of integration	3
Appealing to the sensitivity, comprehension and acceptance by the company	3
Dialoguing with the supported person about their professional strengths and those to improve	3
Honesty	2
Applying the strategies of Gentle Teaching and Person Centred Planning	2

Name examples of relevant assistance given by the person served's colleagues/coworkers.

Teaching them and encouraging them in performing the tasks correctly	8
Material support (eg.: economic help/feeding/gratificações/giving rides)	7
Treating the supported person as any other coworker	5
Supporting the integration in community activities	3
Supporting the daily life routines	2
Participation in community events, counting on the coworkers support	2
Being alert to signs of demotivation	1

In your opinion, which are the key aspects for integration success?

Believing in yourself (supported person), the motivation and feeling valued and helpful	11
The supported person persistence, commitment, proactivity and dedication	5
Adapting to the tasks	4
Healthy relationships between all parties (company, supported person, ASSOL workers, family)	4
Support provided at the work site by employees of the entity	5
Defending the cause/sensitivity for difference	3
Family support of the supported person	2
Physical and emotional well-being of the supported person	2

In your opinion, which are the key aspects for integration failure?

Lack of motivation and commitment of the supported person	9
Non-adaptation of the person and/or entity	8
Lack of sensitivity by the entity	5
Dysfunctional behaviors and habits	2
The supported person's health	2
Uncertainty and lack of investment from employers	2
Other	5

What are the companies expectations from ASSOL support?

Active ASSOL worker follow-up (e.g. always present)	11
Positive, as it recognizes the work developed by ASSOL	2
Help in integrating the person/success in the inclusion of the supported person in the community	2
Other	4

8. POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the questionnaires allows us to draw some conclusions, namely:

About 41 sectors of economic activity have been identified, where supported people are inserted. This is contrary to the idea that there are particularly convenient activities for people with disabilities and essentially show that all sectors and activities are possible, the decisive issue being the adjustment of the person to tasks, but above all to the physical but above all human environment of the place.

Prior preparation or training in the tasks to be performed is not a condition, confirming the ideas expressed by Lou Brown and Van Gennep, who preconize that that it is possible to learn in contexts without it being required that a person has a high level of prior competence to perform the tasks in different workplaces. According to these authors, what is necessary is not the previous training, but rather to give the person the support they need for the performance of the activity as long as necessary.

The certainty of the availability of adequate technical support is an important condition for employers. It follows that when we plan these placements, particularly in traineeships with links to schools, it is essential to ensure support that goes far beyond task training. As evidenced in the questionnaire given to ASSOL employees, support can be mobilized to solve a wide range of problems.

The availability of support that ensures a good and sufficient mediation between the supported person and the employer, is pointed out as indispensable by employers.

The monitoring aims to help solve logistical problems, mediate situations that may arise, plan learning and their continuous and periodic evaluation and articulate with the school or company. For ASSOL support should be given flexibly: not all people need the same intensity of support or support in all areas; in addition, support can and should be gradually reduced. The essence of support is to allow the person to choose and execute things on their own, making them more able to access the resources, information and relationships integrated into the environments in which they live and work.

The effectiveness of ASSOL support translates into the high rate of partnership renewal (around 98%) that has been recorded over the years.

Person-Centered Planning is a methodological approach that enhances the adjustment between the person, the place of support and the available supports.

Person-Centered Planning allows us to know what to do, indicating the direction that the person wants to give to his/her life, his/her desires, interests and motivations and with that we can negotiate with him a set of coherent supports aligned with his life project.

We found no negative reviews or comments on the presence of people with disabilities in the workplace. In fact, there is widespread recognition of its importance in society, at work and in the subsequent positive socio-economic impact.

These data agree with Van Gennep, who argues that a community-based approach close to people and in small and family entities is essential to achieve quality of life for this group of people. This support within the community where they live enables a position on an equal footing as a citizen in society, despite their shortcomings.

The continued presence of people with disabilities is a decisive factor in raising the awareness of employers (and the socio-economic field in general) which translates into the number of times the presence of people with disabilities is referred to as: *an added value/benefit for both parties.*

Employers rate the economic incentives they receive from the government with low levels of importance, favoring instead the increased self-esteem of the supported person, the fact that they feel useful, good and seen as an asset in their workplace, in the tasks they perform and in the environment they create around them.

The person's motivation is the decisive factor and employers are available to help people develop their potential, but not so much to take care or educate them. This point is confirmed by ASSOL employees who were asked "*In your opinion, which are the key aspects for integration failure?*". 9 of 16 respondents mentioned: **"*Lack of motivation and commitment of the supported person.*"**

The presence of supported people in the workplace is crucial to enhance access to employment for people with disabilities. This is evidenced by the fact that the Dão Lafões Employment Centre, whose geographical area coincides with ASSOL's area of intervention being at national level one of the few in which unemployment of people with disabilities is no longer an endemic problem.

General conclusion

1. The availability of employers is positive;

2. The motivations are very varied;

3. Fears tend to fade;

4. The main condition mentioned by employers is to feel supported;

5. The ASSOL employees questionnaire confirms that the availability of this support is a critical factor for success.

In summary, the results show that employers have a strong willingness to cooperate with schools in the performance of internships for young people with disabilities, namely ID, so it is a necessary condition for courses for students with ID to have a strong component of experience in real work context.

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