



VI International Congress on University and Disability Salamanca,

October 25, 26 and 27, 2023

MOVING TOWARDS INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY MODELS

Evaluate inclusion in its different dimensions

MANIFESTO

Recalling that education is a right recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Recalling that, as recognized by UNESCO, the right to education is the right to inclusive education and to guarantee it, it is necessary to identify and eliminate all barriers that prevent access, participation and educational progress for any reason, making it possible for all people, without distinction, to exercise it under equal conditions.

Recognizing that all States that have ratified the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities must take all necessary measures to realize the right to inclusive education, in compliance with Article 24 of the Convention.

Embracing the agreements of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the 2030 Agenda, especially Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 10, and the Education 2030 Framework for Action that inclusion and equity as the foundation of quality education for all people.

Taking on board the recommendation of the Council of the European Union of 22 May 2018 on the promotion of common values, inclusive education and the European dimension in education.

Expressing concern about the difficult access and permanence of people with disabilities to higher education, the dropout rate in previous educational stages and the existing barriers to their academic progress.

Whereas people with disabilities continue to face barriers and obstacles in accessibility, as well as in learning, progress and success in higher education and in teaching and research careers, in the case of faculty and research staff, and in access and job performance, in the case of administrative and service staff.

Considering that universities have the commitment to work, through their services for people with disabilities, so that the teaching and learning process for people with disabilities is based on principles of inclusion and equity.

Considering that people with disabilities are still unable to equal opportunities in access to the bodies of teaching and research staff, as well as promotion within the academic career and correlatively.

Taking into account the digital transformation of universities, the challenges of the new university models and the new Organic Law 2/2023, of March 22, of the University System (LOSU).

WE DECLARE

That a truly inclusive education does not exclusively benefit people with disabilities and other disadvantaged social groups, but provides better academic, personal, social and economic outcomes for society as a whole.

That inclusive education is a complex process that requires a permanent updating of regulatory frameworks, economic resources, teaching innovation, methodologies, resources and universally accessible environments, equitable assessments and active involvement of the entire educational and university community to transform cultures, policies and practices in academic and university contexts.

That, in the international and national quality standards of universities, the certifications they grant must consider inclusion as a value of excellence and assessable through different indicators both for universities and to assess the teaching, research and work trajectories of university staff. Therefore, national and regional evaluation agencies or any international network in which they are integrated must take into account the indicators of universal accessibility training programs. They should also promote quality seals to evaluate and recognize inclusive universities.

In view of the new teaching and learning models and the digital transformation of universities, accessibility and universal design for learning (UDL) must be taken into account as reference models so that no one is excluded. Likewise, it is a legal imperative that technological tools and programs guarantee access and use by people with disabilities, avoiding the digital divide and inequality, in close relationship with civil society organizations.

That States should promote regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance with the main human rights treaties and in the case of Spain establish monitoring mechanisms to enforce compliance with the recent LOSU and its subsequent regulatory development, especially Article 37 and related to an inclusive university, in light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

That, in line with the provisions of the LOSU, universities must adopt affirmative action measures and, where appropriate and where universal measures are insufficient, make reasonable curricular and methodological adjustments to ensure equal opportunities.

That the functions of universities should include university social responsibility with an inclusive approach, taking into account positive actions from intersectionality, with special attention to women with disabilities, people with disabilities in rural environments and people with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities or with high support needs, people with disabilities from the LGTBIQ+ community, as well as other groups with special circumstances of vulnerability.

That universities should promote access to university studies for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities by promoting their own studies that take into account their characteristics and circumstances.

That universities should promote the presence and participation of people with disabilities in all areas of university life and especially the progress of all students, so that they can reach their full potential.

That it is necessary to guarantee the access and academic promotion of people with disabilities to occupy teaching and research staff positions under equal conditions and with the necessary support and affirmative action measures.

That teaching innovation and teaching and learning methodologies that guarantee inclusion should be promoted, as well as tools that make it possible to assess and evaluate the competencies and progress of all students.

To this end, it is necessary to strengthen and promote teacher training for all teachers and administrative and service personnel in the area of inclusion.

That regional, national and international research agencies support research in this area.

Universities should promote academic internships and other strategies that favor the transition of their graduates to quality employment.

That, after the experience of this VI Congress, it is necessary to weave and strengthen networks with universities, civil society organizations and experts to continue developing tools, synergies and common strategies that allow us to create positive networks and actions to work for inclusion, strengthening the existing ones and deepening the right of all people to an inclusive and quality education.

That the ONCE Foundation, from its Department of Programs with Universities and Promotion of Young Talent, should continue to promote collaborative initiatives with universities to highlight the role of people with disabilities in a society that should follow the precepts of Horizon 2030 and move towards equity and equal opportunities.

That from the congress and the enhanced and generated networks, the UNESCO strategy "Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education" should be supported in order to move towards inclusive university models based on clear fundamental principles: guaranteeing the right to quality education throughout life and reinforcing education as a public and universal good.

In short, we are committed to continue working to fulfill the mandate of the United Nations Convention, the 2030 Agenda and to ensure inclusive and quality education for all people.

