

**EU-Assistant:
Development of a VET
curricula for Personal
Assistant professional
profile based on the
European Framework of
Qualifications**



Development of a VET curricula
based on the European

***MODULE 2 –
INDEPENDENT LIVING
PHILOSOPHY***



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1. MODULE DESCRIPTION

MODULE TITLE	INDEPENDENT LIVING PHILOSOPHY
KEYWORDS	Philosophy, independent living, functional diversity, capacity, centers, personal assistance
TARGET GROUP	This module is aimed at those people who want to know where the Personal Assistance figure comes from.
LEVEL	beginner
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES	People who want to become a Personal Assistant for people with functional diversity.
AIMS OF MODULE	<p>This module provides participants with practical knowledge, understanding, resources and opportunities to learn how to work as a personal assistant.</p> <p>The student will know the origin of the independent living philosophy, its development and the consequences of this at individual and collective level.</p>
LEARNING OUTCOMES	Upon completion of this module, the participant will have learned what Independent Living Philosophy is, what its basic principles and pillars are, how this philosophy has developed and how it has evolved into a model of life.

PREREQUISITE(S) SKILLS:	Use of basic ICT.
PREREQUISITE(S) COURSE:	none
GUIDED LEARNING HOURS:	8
COMPENTENCY	The student understands and assumes the Independent Living Model on which Personal Assistance is based.
ASSESMENT	The assessment will consist of a multiple choice test and a response exercise to be developed, which will test students' knowledge and understanding through learning outcomes.
CATEGORY	cost (cost optimization) time (efficient time management) s-quality (service quality) m-quality (management quality)
SUPLEMANTARY MATERIAL(S)	none

2. INTRODUCTION

Dear participant,

Welcome to this module! This module is created within the training framework for people who are interested in becoming personal assistants for people with functional diversity. In this module you will learn about Independent Living Philosophy, the movement that fights for the rights of these people and, through which, the Personal Assistant is created.

Module 1 includes philosophical, sociological, theoretical, and political principles needed to understand how Independent Living Philosophy emerges and evolves, and thus Personal Assistant. We will see how the Independent Living Centers are founded and for what purposes. We will study the ILP, its pillars and basic principles and the development of the independent model of life as a product of the change in mentality of people with functional diversity, who from the 60s will fight for their rights, mainly to exercise control of their lives.

Warm regards,

EU-Assistant Project Team

3. ORIGIN AND HISTORY

The birth of the independent life movement may be in time on the day that Ed Roberts, a student, accessed the University of California (Berkeley) after having overcome many difficulties due to his disability and the limits of the model medical-rehabilitator of treatment that prevailed at that time. Roberts had a so-called "severe" functional diversity, and from his earliest years on, his family and medical background had considered that it would not be possible for him to achieve certain goals such as marrying, attending college or gaining employment. However, despite their lack of trust in his possibilities, Roberts overcame some of the barriers and managed to attend school and, later, the college where he would prepare to enter university.



At that time (60's), only four universities in the United States accomplished the accessibility requirements, to enter, necessary for women and men with reduced mobility. However, Roberts was determined to go to the university that considered better for his academic career, without limiting this choice to those accessible universities. That is the reason why Roberts applied to the University of California (Berkeley) for a degree in Political Science. Finally, Roberts got himself admitted to that university and went to live in the infirmary (because the student residence was not accessible), but not before surpassing many barriers, both architectonic and mental.

Roberts graduated in Political Science, graduated in Political Science and began working on his doctoral thesis, and in 1967, there were twelve students with functional diversity living in the infirmary of the University of California. As we can see, Ed Roberts was opening doors that allowed better opportunities to the other people with functional diversity.

Not conforming only to his access to college, in the spring of 1970, Roberts launched a Physically Functional Diversity Student Program, which opened in a new office in The Campus, accessible and equipped with ramps.

From their experiences, Roberts and his colleagues, developed a program for students with functional diversity that reflected what was needed to live independently. This, as expected, was a before and after, redefined the concept of independence as the control that a person has over his own life.

Following the University's experience, the Leaders of the Physically Functional Diversity Student Program discussed how to implement a similar program, but not limited to students.

This program identified the various services required to enable women and men with functional diversity to live independently in their community, and behind it was the idea to create an Independent Living Center, based on the same principles as the Students Program, which was inaugurated in the year 1972.

In this center, directed by women and men with functional diversity, they addressed their problems as social issues, working with different types of functional diversity and having as main objective their integration into society.

The independent living movement was spreading its philosophy throughout the country, then crossing national borders. It should be noted that it has had an enormous influence in countries like Sweden, Canada, England and, also, Spain.

4. INDEPENDENT LIVING PHILOSOPHY

4.1. What is it?

"People who move differently, those who receive the sensations in another way or those who interpret the world in a very different way, we do not have to be sick, we can be happy, we can love and be loved, we can contribute things, even take initiatives and be useful. It was born what is known as Independent Living. "

Manuel Lobato Galindo, Activist in Independent Living

The Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) Program of Houston described independent living as control over one's life based on the choice of acceptable options that minimize reliance on others in making decisions and in performing everyday activities. This includes managing one's own affairs, participating in day-to-day life in the community, fulfilling a range of social roles, and making decisions that lead to self-determination and the minimization of psychological or physical dependence upon others. Independence is a relative concept that may be defined personally by each individual.

The global Independent Living Philosophy (ILP), is constituted in a new theoretical-practical thinking around the human reality, denominated "functional diversity".

Through this, women and men with functional diversity claim their right to live in an active and independent way, being included in the community, with the necessary human support (one of them, Personal Assistance).

This philosophy makes it possible to understand that people with functional diversity also enrich and, therefore, institutionalization as a way of life is not acceptable, since it does not allow them to contribute to society, thus having the human and technological supports necessary to be able to exercise as citizens in equal opportunities.



Logo of the Independent Living movement

As we have seen so far, we can clearly say that the concept of "Independent Living" is broad and encompasses the full range of experiences and human rights. These rights include, but are not limited to:

- Right to be born
- Right to access appropriate medical treatment, how and when it is needed
- Right to education with people without functional diversity
- Equality of access to work
- Right to engage in leisure activities
- Right to participate in political processes and institutions
- Right to have personal and sexual relationships, as well as to parenthood and motherhood
- Right to participate fully in the life of the community



Logo of a fist with the words: support, disability and rights

From the ILP, it is argued that to allow people with functional diversity to achieve a significantly independent life is necessary to eradicate any structural and cultural disadvantage, impacting globally at political and cultural level.

4.2. Independent Living Centers

As we saw earlier, Ed Roberts, began the development of the Independent Living Movement when in 1970, from the university, managed to carry out the Physically Functional Diversity Student Program, within the campus of the University of California.

However, his most important claim success came two years later, when, together with the functional diversity group that met at the university, he founded the first Independent Living Center (ILC).

In the mid-1970s, Independent Living Centers throughout California, Houston, Boston, New York and Chicago already existed. Currently, there are more than 400 Independent Living Centers in the United States, as well as important networks in other countries.

Although these centers have the same philosophy worldwide, their form of constitution, services and funding may vary from place to place. Its objective is to train people with functional diversity so that they can organize the services they need to live independently and thus exercise control over their own lives. These centers are directed by people with functional diversity who have chosen an Independent Living model and intend to help other people live under this philosophy.

5. PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS

There are several concepts of "Independent Living", which focus on some key concepts:

- ideal,
- election,
- control,
- freedom,
- equality.

In this way, a primary goal of THE Independent Living Philosophy is to match the opportunities available to people with disabilities.

The following are the reflections that have been carried out by some people around the concept of Independent Living.

Philip Mason expressed it as an ideal:

"Our dream was that people with disabilities could play their roles in terms of taking the opportunities that society offers, and fulfilling the responsibilities that society requires."

For his part, John Evans expressed it as a freedom:

"The essence of independent living is the freedom to make decisions about your own life and to fully participate in your community."

Finally, the National Independent Living Center of the United Kingdom defines it as a choice:

"Independent living for people with disabilities means being able to live the way you choose, with the people you choose. It means being able to choose who helps you and how they help you. It's not necessarily about doing things for yourself, it's about having control over your daily life. "

However, independent living is not only an individual purpose, but a philosophical as well as a practical approach in which people with disabilities are brought together to work for civil and human rights. That is, it implies a change in social relations and economic reality that ensures equal opportunities for all and their self-determination. It is the pursuit of a very simple goal:

"... Independent Living means that people with disabilities want the same opportunities for life and the same possibilities of choice in daily life that their brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends without disabilities take for granted"

The Derbyshire ILC identified seven "basic needs" for independent living, using the social model to analyze the need:

- Information: know what the options are.
- Support between equal: receive encouragement, counseling and guidance from other people with disabilities.
- Accommodation: have a place, fit for the needs of each one, where to live.
- Equipment: receive technical aids to reduce unnecessary dependence on others.
- Personal Assistance: receive human support in daily tasks.
- Transportation: have the possibility to arrive to the desired place.
- Access to the environment: access and participate in community services on equal terms.

5.1. Basic principles

The Basic Principles on which the Independent Living Philosophy is based are:

1. Human and civil rights;
2. Self-determination;
3. Self-help (Support between equal);
4. Possibility to exercise power (Empowerment);
5. Responsibility over one's life and actions;
6. Right to take risks; and,
7. Living in the community.

5.2. Pillars that support this philosophy

The pillars on which the World Independent Living Philosophy is based are:

- Every human life has value.
- Everyone, regardless of their diversity, is able to make choices.
- People with functional diversity are responsible for society's response to their physical, intellectual and sensorial diversity and have the right to exercise control over their lives.
- People with functional diversity have the right to full participation in society.

5.3. Independent Living Manifesto

The Independent Living Manifesto carried out within the framework of the ILP is quoted below.

Preamble

The development of humanity is based on diversity, of which "disability" is an inherent part, and to which it contributes positively. People with functional diversity are discriminated against, mainly because our existence is not valued in the same terms as in the rest of society. People with functional diversity who depend on other people for their daily life activities are further discriminated against because they are not allowed to have control of their lives and are often confined to residences or a dependency model family. The philosophy of independent living aims to change the view that society has on people with functional diversity, and especially on those who depend on others for the normal development of their daily lives. As people with functional diversity, that we have a life "dependent" and that we look for an independent life. We manifest that:

- 1. Every life has a great value and every human being must have the opportunities and necessary alternatives so that he can decide on the issues that affect his life.*
- 2. Functional Diversity is an inherent fact to the human being and we understand it as a manifestation of human diversity.*
- 3. The basic principles of the Independent Living Philosophy are: human and civil rights, self-determination, self-help, empowerment, responsibility for one's life and actions, and the right to take risks.*
- 4. Personal Assistance Services are essential for people with severe functional diversity.*
- 5. The Society, with its political, social and economic leaders, must provide an environment and services designed in such a way that we live on equal terms with the rest of the citizens.*
- 6. NOTHING ABOUT US / WITHOUT US!*

We reject:

- 1. The idea that living with functional diversity involves only suffering, oppression, marginalization and that we have to assume what others decide for us.*
- 2. Impunity for non-compliance with legislation and norms that seek to guarantee our rights.*

3. *The current medical model of functional diversity that classifies us by pathologies and divides us artificially under strictly political and bureaucratic criteria that hinder the implementation, efficiency and efficiency of services for people with functional diversity.*

4. *The discretionary and gracious character of accessibility to the environment, buildings and transportation, communication, and access to the necessary technological applications.*

5. *The serious shortcomings and deficiencies in the application of the current legislation that prevent our access to the educational system in equal opportunities.*

6. *The special marginalization of women with functional diversity who suffer, on the double, as women and as people with functional diversity, the pressure of a hostile environment towards their condition.*

We claim:

1. *That our voice be heard in all debates on issues that affect our lives, especially the topic of Bioethics. Special emphasis should be placed on people with cognitive impairments or mental illness, in the sense that other people are watching over their interests and making decisions for them.*

2. *The model of independent living as the inspirer of all initiatives and services for people with functional diversity. Likewise, resources and services, whether public or private, must be managed, as far as possible, by people with functional diversity and, without exception, the capacity to influence and control themselves.*

3. *The conditions necessary for us to be able to direct our lives and take care of ourselves. To achieve this, Accessibility has to be guaranteed and a genuine System of Provision of Technical Aids, nonexistent, must be established to ensure that people with functional diversity have the necessary devices or adaptations.*

4. *Personal Assistance Services that are really useful and where we can select train and pay our personal assistants and provide the necessary funds so that no person who needs them will lack them for economic reasons.*

5. *Education in equal opportunities as a fundamental tool so that we can develop and live in an environment designed by and for people without functional diversity.*

6. *The right to sexuality and to form a family.*

6. SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

6.1. Global Movement for Independent Living

Thus, the Independent Living Movement (ILM) was born in the United States, between the 1960s and 1970s, as a new social movement led by people with functional diversity who fight for their emancipation and empowerment, both at the level Individual as a collective. This struggle becomes especially important and necessary for those people who need human support to carry out different activities in their daily lives.

REVOLUTION

A GLOBAL INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT

Annual Conference on Independent Living 2017

Logo of revolution: a global independent living movement (annual conference on independent living 2017)

The movement was driven by these people from civil organizations, universities and veterans' associations and their initial goal was to get people with functional diversity from hospitals and institutions, and even from their own homes, where you were In order to return them to a life of community participation. This action emerges as a radical response to social stereotypes created from ideas such as that a person with functional diversity can not work, can not take care of itself or can not take responsibility for his own life.

The Independent Living Movement has the following principles:

- Deinstitutionalization
- Self-determination
- Nondiscrimination
- Demedicalization
- Self-management of the supports
- Peer support

The principles of Independent Living and its philosophy are applied on a global scale to be implemented locally, nationally and internationally, regardless of functional diversity, sex,

religion, race, background, political affiliation, age or sexual orientation. The concept of the Person with Functional Diversity (PDF) of the Independent Living Movement has spread all over the world, with ILOs (Independent Living Offices) operating in all continents, providing adequate solutions in the most diverse cultures and socioeconomic environments: Brazil, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Nicaragua, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Italy, Uganda, Ireland, Vietnam, etc.

The motto that exemplifies his Philosophy is:

NOTHING ABOUT US / WITHOUT US!

The idea of "independent living", as defended in the movement of people with functional diversity around the world, is a radical concept because it poses a challenge to conventional thinking about disability and combines a solution both ideological and practical of the daily environmental and cultural problems with people with functional diversity and their families. Moreover, the notion of "independent living" not only enhances the quality of life of people with functional diversity, but also that of other structurally disadvantaged groups such as women, minority ethnic groups, elderly people or homosexual women and men.

The political demands of the international movement of people with functional diversity, we must understand them as a demand for socio-political reinterpretation of disability.

Outside the Independent Living Movement itself, the public and professional conception of Independent Living tends to be limited to the conception of people with functional diversity only as users of support services, which is incorrect and discriminatory.

In fact, people with functional diversity are clients, workers, students, parents, taxpayers and voters, and community members. The purpose of any form of support should therefore be to enable people to overcome the practical barriers they face to participate in all those roles and activities. This is why spending on independent living needs to be considered as a form of positive investment. Greater participation not only benefits people with disabilities themselves, but also brings economic benefits to governments, businesses and communities.

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