

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING  
FOR PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES  
THROUGH  
CULTURAL  
INSTITUTIONS**



**count me in**

# Imprint

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## Foreword

People with special needs are first and foremost human beings with the right to participate as equally in the society as any person without a disability. To be and feel included in society – be it at work, in school or in leisure activities – helps to define who we are and where we belong. However, due to physical, communicative and social barriers society is not always inclusive to people with special needs.

A prerequisite for successful inclusion is a mutual acceptance of diversity within society, so that all people are acknowledged as individuals and feel included. “Count me in” is a European initiative that works towards the inclusion of people with special needs in the labour market by creating equal opportunities to explore and develop, based upon the skills, resources and ambitions of the individual.

From this starting point the initiative promotes employment and education for people with special needs within the cultural sector, thus contributing significantly to the feeling of being truly included in society. The partners work closely with the local community. For example GAIA Museum cooperates with City of Randers by matching people with special needs to different jobs in the museum with the main focus of the match being based on the individual's ambitions, competencies and possibilities for development.

It is my hope that the positive experiences and important recommendations in this publication can inspire future work on employment and education for people with special needs. Likewise, I hope that the Count Me In project can contribute to a greater understanding and appreciation of people with special needs, so they can receive an opportunity to develop and use their full potential.

**Knud Aarup**  
CEO  
The Danish National Board of Social Services



# Introduction

At the heart of social inclusion is a belief that the arts and culture are for everyone. European cultural life is established by the people who make up European communities. It mirrors the diversity of our countries' cultural identities and historical backgrounds. Europe has a strong focus on social inclusion. The European Union's Europe 2020 Strategy promotes social inclusion and encourages member states to pay particular attention to the employment of those furthest away from the labour market. It states that lifelong learning is for everyone and no citizens in Europe should be discriminated against in employment. This includes people who are more specifically disadvantaged because of certain social and individual disabilities.

The value of social inclusion is evident at GAIA Museum Outsider Art in Randers, Denmark. For over 10 years we have developed vocational education and training VET for people with disabilities in the framework of a cultural institution. By using a cultural institution as framework for training, the museum not only promotes the rights of particular groups to be involved in and have access to artistic and cultural activities, it also enhances their opportunities to work in areas interacting with the general public. It exemplifies the resources of people with social and individual disabilities – and the beneficial outcomes of using the resources of museums in the vocational, education and training (VET) sector.

This is exactly what the Count Me In project is about. This project took its starting point in a shared need to explore and transfer innovative methodologies in VET for special needs groups in the cultural sector to other institutions within Europe. The overall aim is to raise the competences of training professionals working in the special needs area and hence, to improve the opportunities for their trainees to access the labour market.

Within this publication are two articles introducing the practice at GAIA Museum Outsider Art and the different take on art workshops at Debajo del Sombreo in Madrid, Spain which are followed by tips and guidelines for VET professionals based on the experience of all project partners. Finally, we present a number of European and international examples of vocational training for people with disabilities in cultural branches such as museums and galleries, theatre, dance, media, landscaping and public spaces and music festivals. We hope the innovative methodologies included in the publication will inspire VET professionals around Europe.

The aim of Count Me In - to create educational tools for trainers of special needs groups and educators in the arts and cultural sector - is complemented by a live training course and a series of on-line eLearning modules. So please take a look at the project website for more information and to connect with other VET professionals around Europe: [www.count-me-in.eu](http://www.count-me-in.eu)

**Dorte Eiersbo**  
**Director**  
**GAIA Museum Outsider Art**

# GAIA Museum Outsider Art

Diversity and development at GAIA Museum Outsider Art, Denmark

## INTRODUCTION

**GAIA Museum Outsider Art offers a unique combination of being a cultural institution providing services for people with disabilities and special needs at market conditions, which at the same time uses innovative educational concepts to support their development. The aim of this article is to introduce the organisation of GAIA Museum, its philosophy and the methods and tools they use.**

## GAIA MUSEUM’S OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

GAIA Museum is situated in the city of Randers in Denmark. It was founded in 2002, with the objective to provide cultural experiences, knowledge and education for the general public in the field of outsider art.

The museum arranges three temporary exhibitions of outsider art from around the world each year, in addition to the display of artworks from an ever expanding

permanent collection. In addition the museum has several programmes and services such as; Café GAIA Papaya, a picture framing workshop, a media department called GAIA Bite, and a museum shop supplied by its own handicraft workshop called GAIA Design. These activities generate employment opportunities for approximately 80 people with special needs. The basic idea is to offer them real jobs related to culture as full-time employees. A core philosophy is to match the employees with relevant challenges and to create opportunities for personal and job development.

In addition to GAIA Museum, the GAIA Academy was established in 2010. The Academy provides a 3 year vocational education program in visual arts and culture. The target group is young people with learning difficulties or diagnosis such as autism and Asperger’s syndrome. Typically the academy has around 10 students per year. The aim is to educate the participants to become independent, giving them the skills to handle everyday challenges, as well as giving them the best qualifications to find a job in the cultural sector.

### Definitions

- // Outsider Art is defined as artistic products created by people who somehow differ from the social norm – including people with learning disabilities and others who do not have access to the mainstream art world systems of training, production and consumption.
- // Employees at GAIA Museum are defined as people with special needs working in sheltered facilities such as the workshops.
- // Staff at GAIA Museum are defined as people working in functions such as team-managers, teachers and advisors.



## METHODS AND PHILOSOPHY

The director of GAIA Museum, Dorte Eiersbo is the founder of the organisation and responsible for establishing new initiatives. She highlights the following fields as GAIA Museum's trademarks methods:

### The importance of values

Courage, sense of humour and diversity. These are the core values that work as pillars of the GAIA Museum organisation. The staff must bear these values in mind when meeting the employees. It is this common terminology that forms the professional bond of the organisation.

Furthermore the staff transform these values into behaviour when developing the employees skills and mutual relations. The spirit and human approach to the employees is pictured by Dorte Eiersbo as: "We are convinced that every employee can offer a valuable contribution. It is our task never to say that ideas and wishes are not realistic, but that such ideas must take place at their own specific pace."

"Is there anything we can do to help you?"

### A human resource approach to the employees

It is emphasized that GAIA Museum's employees are not regarded as clients or trainees but as an important and indispensable parts of the workforce - despite the facts that they work in sheltered environments and that they are supported by the local municipality in their work. The working programme is tailor-made for



each individual. Before an employee starts working at GAIA Museum there is a formal dialogue between a member of staff and the new employee, where the expectations and resources of the employee are mapped. From this background a job function matching the resource is created. The personal and job-related development of the employee is continuously monitored and supported. Once a year a formal development interview is carried through – as is common practice in every workplace in Denmark. The employees also have the opportunity for career advancement. For example they can move from job functions that are closely monitored by their advisors/ team managers to more independent functions.

### **Structure is an important frame**

The working days at GAIA Museum start with meetings in each department, where the work of the day is planned and news exchanged. This concept has been developed over the years and is regarded as very important. Dorte Eiersbo specifies: *"The employees have the opportunity to develop their resources and talents, but it is important that there is a clear and firm framework in which this development can take place and where they can feel safe."*

### **The profile of the staff**

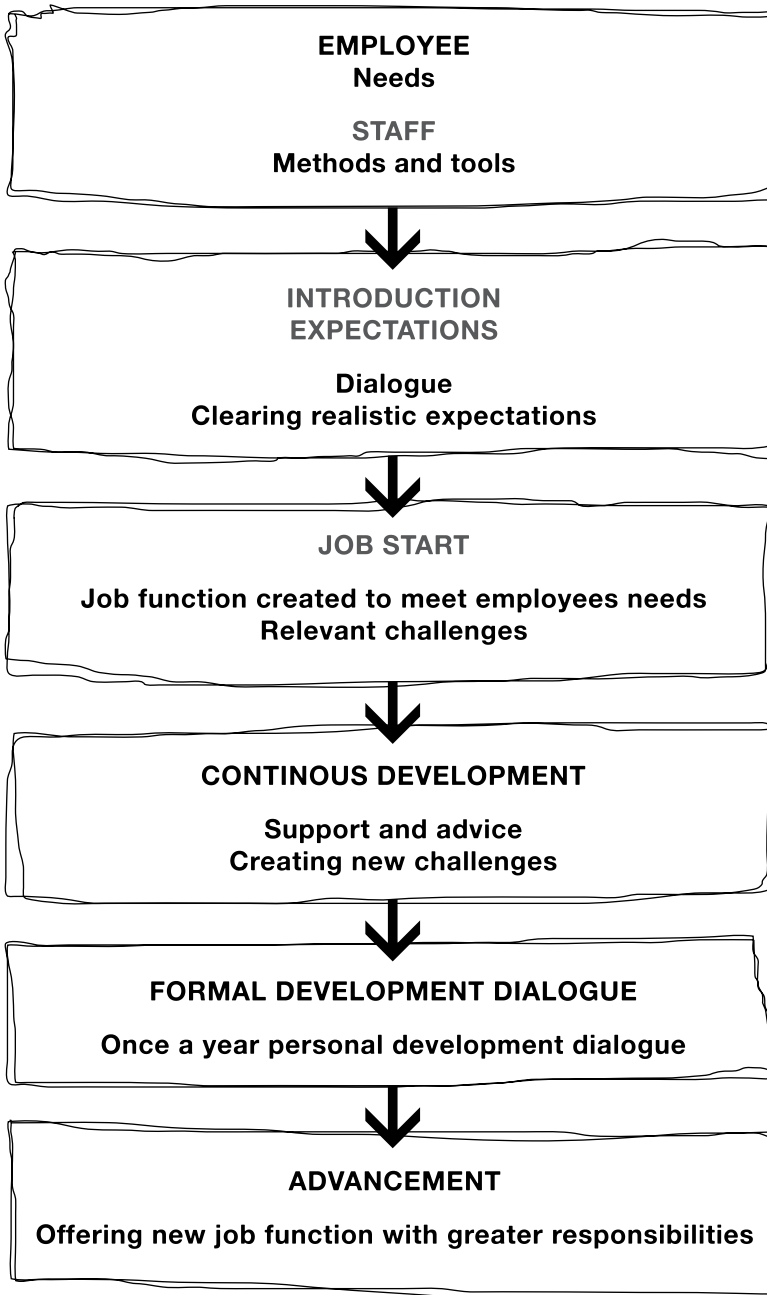
From the director's perspective it is a strategic choice to select the ideal profiles of the staff. In a branch where there is equal focus is on providing relevant sheltered working places for people with special needs as on producing services and goods in line with market conditions, there are obvious dilemmas. Should recruitment of staff emphasize pedagogical skills or vocational competences? Dorte Eiersbo describes her considerations: *"Diversity is also a key word when choosing new members of the staff – and at GAIA Museum we are a very mixed group. There is an ongoing mutual support amongst the staff. So the pedagogical talents are developed for the vocationally strong persons – and the other way around."*

”

The employees have the opportunity to develop their resources and talents, but it is important that there is a clear and firm framework in which this development can take place and where they can feel safe

- Dorte Eiersbo

## A TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR AN EMPLOYEE







## PREPARATION AND INTRODUCTION OF THE EMPLOYEES

GAIA Museum cooperates closely with Randers Municipality in the process of matching people with special needs with the job offers that GAIA Museum provides. An important step during this process is a practice period lasting up to 4 weeks where potential employees are introduced

to GAIA Museum and observations are made. GAIA Museum tries to clarify whether or not it is a suitable environment for this specific person, to describe their basic skills and competences and how the person interacts with other people.

**” WE DELIBERATELY MEET THE PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ON A VERY LOW PRE-KNOWLEDGE LEVEL. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US AND THE INDIVIDUAL THAT WE APPROACH THE PERSON - NOT THE DIAGNOSIS.”**

- Anders Buus

The Statement of Practice Period is presented to the participant. It is also an important tool in the dialogue with the municipality about how and on which

conditions the individual will be offered a job at GAIA Museum. Furthermore it forms the basis from which to create a relevant job function for the individual.

### **The Statement of Practice Period is a central document, containing:**

- A description of the workshop in which the practice period has taken place
- A description of the job functions that the person has worked on
- The observations on how the person interacts with employees and the staff
- Intellectual capabilities
- Social capabilities
- Additional observations or comments
- Specific issues
- Development aims
- Conclusion





”

We have a recipe – a so called statement of practice period – which we have to follow when finding out whether a job at GAIA Museum is the relevant activity for each individual. The idea is to get a picture of the competences of each person and to spot which functions he or she is capable of

- explains Anders Buus, team manager at Design Workshop



## CLARIFICATION AND PROGRESSION

The aim of GAIA Museum's activities from the employees' perspective is to have a challenging job with the possibility of progression in an authentic work environment. Furthermore, it focuses on strengthening the employee's capability to handle basic demands such as personal appearance and to participate in the natural community in a workplace.

Once a year an interview between the staff in charge of the workshop and each employee is carried out – a so called employee development dialogue. Bonnie Koch, in charge of the museum shop and the creative workshop explains:

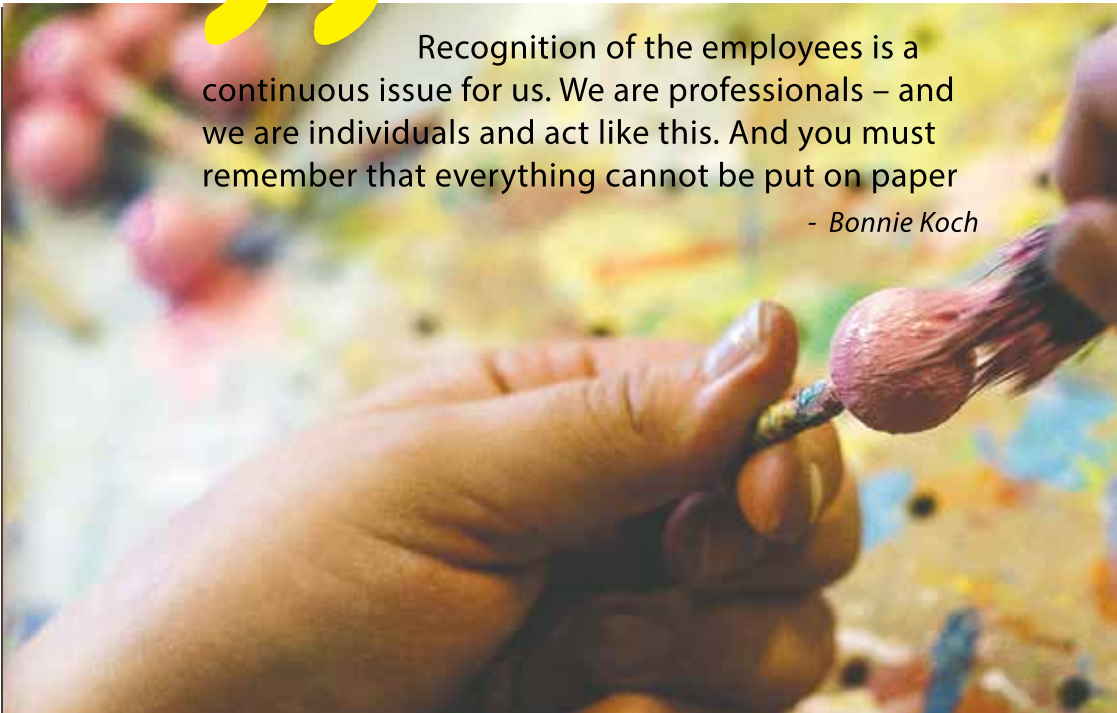
*"The interview reflects that this is a real workplace. It makes the employees competences visible – and this leads to higher self-esteem."*

The interview is structured by a number of questions on themes such as job satisfaction, relations to the colleagues, flexibility and motivation for new job functions.

”

Recognition of the employees is a continuous issue for us. We are professionals – and we are individuals and act like this. And you must remember that everything cannot be put on paper

- Bonnie Koch



## MENTORSHIP

Learning from each other are common tools used at GAIA Museum. Employees learning from their peers is formalised as a method which describes the different services that are provided and goods that are manufactured at GAIA Museum. This method is called a ***description of function***. In this context the competences of each employee is scaled towards the work processes on a quite detailed level.

To give an example: Manufacturing a candlelight holder consists of 11 processes from painting parts of the holder to quality control. The function description is graded into which level each employee is capable of solving the work process: independently- with guidance- with practical or physical assistance – capable of helping colleagues.



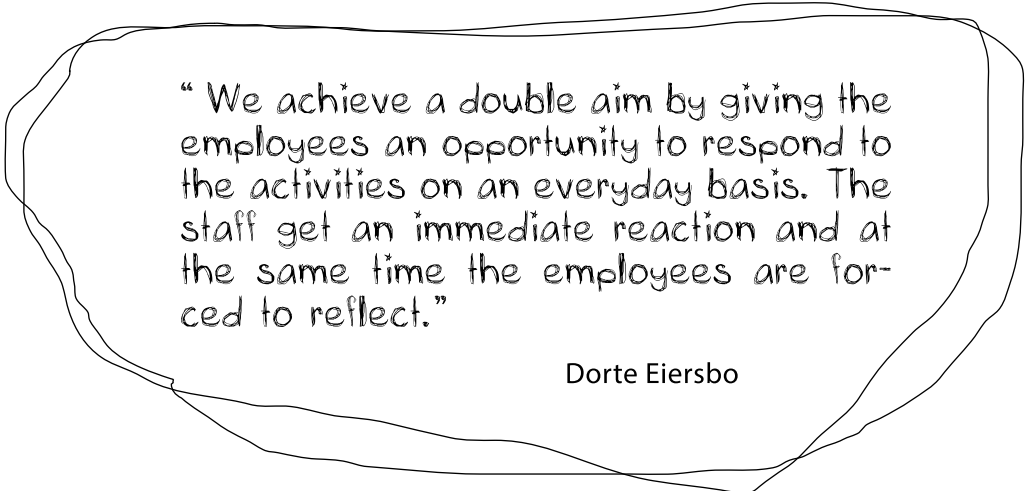
When employees are scaled as capable of helping colleagues they can work as mentors and thereby support other colleagues. The idea and effect of this is described by Mrs. Koch: *"We establish mentorships to support the development of the mentor as well as the development of the mentee. We observe that both of them generally are proud of being in this relationship."*

# "ARE YOU HAPPY WITH YOUR WORK?"

This is one out of 6 questions that the employees are asked in a yearly survey about job satisfaction. The question signifies that the employees' opinion on the activities at GAIA Museum is of great importance. The results of the survey are used for general development purposes and as an additional way to improve the dialogue with the employees.

Development of tools and methods is an ongoing process at GAIA Museum. Currently they are working on a new idea that will give an impression of the employees' job satisfaction:

Everyday each employee can mark with "smileys" whether it has been a positive day or not.



"We achieve a double aim by giving the employees an opportunity to respond to the activities on an everyday basis. The staff get an immediate reaction and at the same time the employees are forced to reflect."

Dorte Eiersbo







“

We work in two areas, on the one hand we have expectations from the municipality to provide relevant jobs for the employees. On the other hand the market expects products of high quality of the services and products we supply. That is challenging – but it also gives us unique possibilities

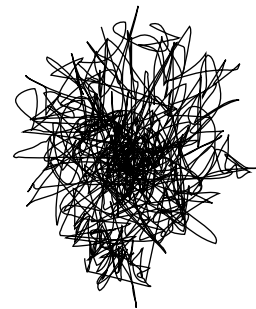
- Dorte Eiersbo

# TAILOR-MADE TOOLS AND NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

As presented on the previous page, the director and staff at GAIA Museum are very aware about how to support employees with special needs. Methods are developed when needs occur as an ongoing process. The natural demands from the environment, for example the customers, are deliberately used to shape competences.

Dorte Eiersbo explains *“We work in two areas, on the one hand we have expectations from the municipality to provide relevant jobs for the employees. On the other hand the market expects products of high quality of the services and products we supply. That is challenging – but it also gives us unique possibilities.”*

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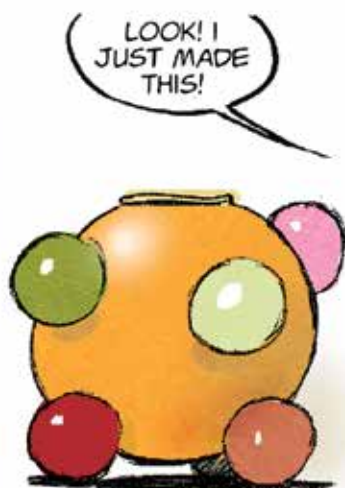
# GAIA Museum Outsider Art





IN A PECULIAR WAY LIFE IS GOING ON LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED, AND YET, SOME PLACES ARE LIKE AN ANTHILL... EVERY MORNING JAN PUTS UP THE SIGNS FOR GAIA...









# Debajo Del Sombrero

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Facilitating art by people with intellectual disabilities

## 1. / Structure

"Debajo del Sombrero" has no locale of its own. Its activities and programs are immersed in relevant cultural institutions in Madrid.

The Matadero was the first space which welcomed El Sombrero, giving us the crucial elements and reflective context in which to impart validity as an art project. The Matadero houses the important Center of Contemporary Creation, occupying the former buildings of the old Municipal Slaughterhouse of Madrid. In June of 2007 this Center was inaugurated under the administration of Intermediae, an institution of cultural promotion which defines its activities according to three axis with which we are wholly identified:

**1 / a horizontal relation between the public, the work, and the artist**

**2 / a priority given to the artistic process as opposed to the product and**

**3 / a multidisciplinary approach as the key of intercommunication in the environment.**

Under these premises "Al Matadero sin Miedo" was born, accessible to persons with intellectual disabilities and independent of their support needs. Since then, every Wednesday the buildings of Intermediae are converted into a space for artistic experimentation with the plastic arts. At present there are 33 participants together with various collaborators: students of the Faculty of Fine Arts and other studies, artists representing different disciplines and special education professionals. Altogether, there are more than 50 associates.







The workshop is conceived as a laboratory of experimentation in an environment of multi-level communication in all its possible forms. Its objective is therefore to create a space sufficiently elastic and receptive to promote, enhance and accompany all forms of communication. This is a bi-directional process, shared across time between collaborator and participant and based fundamentally in the lived experience of the participant.

The union between experience and the special sense of time any artist or student has, will serve us as a model for framing the entire project of *Debajo del Sombrero*. The project seeks to be sensitive to this individual feeling of time and enter into communication with it.

*"Al Matadero sin Miedo"* has celebrated its 5th year developing as a lived process in constant transformation and progress. The workshop has continued changing form, always tied to the interests of its participants, resulting in the appearance of new areas: painting and construction / drawing, comic, animation and video / sound and movement.

In 2008 a new program was opened in *La Casa Encendida*, an institution considered to be a point of cultural reference in Madrid for the modernity of its expositions. From its beginnings *La Casa Encendida* has spoken for a new sensibility regarding values of solidarity and in this regard has served as an active agent and transformer of current thinking.

A new program was therefore conceived, *"El Sombrero en la Casa"* with the objective of gathering the talent of persons with intellectual disabilities and a clear artistic vocation, providing them with the opportunity for experimentation in the plastic arts with other artists, experts, and technical resources. The workshops give them opportunity to shape their expressive language in the form of personal projects, supported by itinerant visits by recognized artists.

In 2009, with the purpose of supporting and complementing the trajectory of the participants, a third program was introduced, *"The Sombrero in the Fine Arts,"* housed in the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Complutense University of Madrid. With



this project a door was thus opened to the experimental arts at the University, but outside of the conventional instructional framework.

“The Artists of the Sombrero” is the fourth program, a further step to instigate and promote professional careers for those persons with exceptional artistic potential. Organized in trimesters, six artists work full-time, refining their personal projects most apt for presentation in an exhibition.

The first intensive trimester took place from January through April in 2011 in a workshop of artists in residence, managed

by AVAM (Madrid Association of Visual Artists), sharing a work space with other artists without intellectual incapacities.

From October 2011 through June 2012 the artists joined “El Ranchito,” a program sponsored by the Matadero also offering residency and work spaces for artists, located in Building 16 of the Matadero.

Beginning in October of 2012 “Los Artistas del Sombrero” became independently organized in a space provided for them by the Matadero.





Whether the participants take it or not, we leave them with a bit of contact with unknown experiences

## 2. / Resources

By discussing resources we would like to recognize the series of persons and spaces with whom we have been working in the development of the project. Questions related to artistic education and the professionalization of the participants created the need to contact various types of collaborators - invited artists, students, professors, technical experts, as well as educational institutions and promoters.

The Faculty of Fine Arts, El Matadero, La Casa Encendida and the intensive creative workshops were initially means of establishing the project and over time became its structural axes. The need to address the goals of the project required resources and structures which did not exist. At the same time the project, once in contact with the institutions, in turn modified their usual scope of activities as we provided a resource for intervention they were lacking.

It was in the first program, "Al Matadero sin Miedo" when the figure of the collaborator came about. This was a person who accompanied and supported one or various participants, following and orienting when necessary and directing each participant's work according to their level of development.

As an art project we quickly saw the need to find collaboration from the world of the arts, establishing a maximum of one collaborator for each participant. Since

the context meant that collaboration had to be achieved with a continual movement of people entering and leaving the project, we agreed upon a basic protocol for participation - the collaborator would not only participate directly with the participants in work sessions- but would also participate in meetings every Wednesday prior to the workshops. A minimum commitment of three months was also required for the purpose of providing continuity and stability in their support.

Each workshop therefore began with an evaluation meeting by the collaborators with respect to the previous session. Each collaborator freely talked about their experience and what they were learning or discovering. In the time between sessions each collaborator was encouraged to upload commentaries, suggestions and photos to the private Blog of the project.

We like to point out that the richness of the collaboration derives from the fact that its form is invented by each collaborator. Each brings what they are as persons and shares it in the form of support and their manner of being with the participant, establishing a side-by-side relationship with the person in their charge. The most significant cases have been those collaborators who have assisted in the workshops for four years in a row, convincing us that they have adopted participation as something of their own and perhaps different from the original rea-



sons they had for helping the person with intellectual disability. Through the relationship the collaborators have been transformed, earning for themselves their own space in the workshop on a par with the person accompanied, a privileged space of independent communication which reworks the typical model of the relation between persons with intellectual disabilities and those without as each discovers themselves a new, as distinct.

We have extended this relation to all who have come into contact with the project. This is the case with the artists invited to the workshop at "La Casa Encendida". Artists from a range of disciplines pass through the classrooms bringing with them fragments of their own worlds, of their lives, which are meant to serve as a spark for the participants. Whether the participants take it or not, we leave them with a bit of contact with unknown experiences. The objective is to open a creative communicative space in a side-by-side dialogue in which the

authenticity of each is allowed to flourish, according to what each person simply is. The Faculty of Fine Arts receives us on Tuesdays in the drawing classrooms. The participants practice drawing using a statue or directly with a nude model. On Thursdays the program moves to the forging classrooms for a workshop in stone and wood. In both cases students, professors and workshop instructors follow the work of the participants, giving them advice with specific technical procedures, materials and work tools with which we are not familiar. The Faculty of Fine Arts probably has the best artistic studios that exist given the richness of the resources at their disposition.

All of these resources form a sustainable network not only for external communication but also for providing the experience and knowledge which benefits both parties, the institutions and Debajo del Sombrero.



### 3. / Method

The method employed in our project is individualistic. We want to search for the key steps taken by the participants in the workshops, an exercise for us similar to reading and interpretation, which allow them to progress toward the adoption of a personal artistic language.

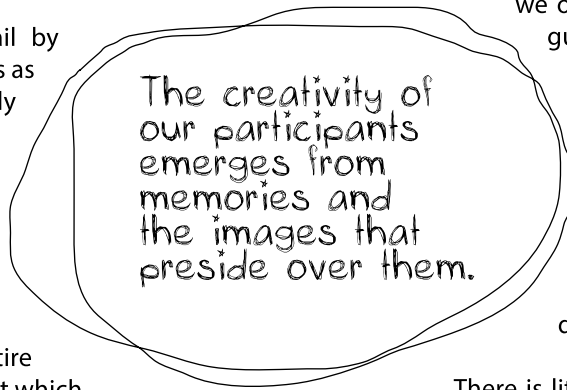
We pursue the trail by considering all signs as valid clues, especially the manner each participant adopts in the conduct of their lives - their attitudes, their individual rhythm, their expressed interests and the entire oceans of disinterest which, if understood as signs and signals, indicate much more than is apparent.

The question of how to faithfully read these signs and signals without going beyond their meaning in the lives of the participants, opens a wide range of questions and a multiplicity of possible answers. How can teaching be carried out without stifling the person's originality? How do we break them of their habits of repeating learned, stereotypic formulas? How do we provoke curiosity, exploration and persistence? How can we enrich a space to provide support for the possible, and where the unexpected may occur?

The project and its participants move in subterranean worlds of creation. We have to follow their tracks, learning to read by intuition, and interpret them by creating threads of knowledge from the observation of any signal that emerges on the surface.

Although the knowledge we obtain may be ambiguous and uncertain, or even contradictory and the result of subjective interpretation, these signals form a platform for communication between truly distinct worlds.

There is little chance of losing the sense provided by these tracks, because we are accompanying by standing behind, faithfully following their own direction that points to the strengths of each person and perhaps even more so to their weaknesses. The latter are kept hidden by silence, resistant to being brought out by direct communication. Resistance, which hides apprehension, is a form of modesty which protects against the risk of being subjugated when one lives in a state of dependency, and having a disability is one form of dependency. It is part of the passive world which awaits underground and requires appropriate consideration, not any kind but a treatment that does not negate one's being, the being that one has: the immovable site of movement, the passive site of activity.



This is where Debajo del Sombrero encounters the need to intermingle with the experience and worlds of other artists, immersed in the culture and in education, because its role is essentially that of a mediator. Mediation is communication in a measured way, being adapted to the other's needs.

Debajo del Sombrero seeks to be the vehicle for communication taking into account the unique modes and manners of learning and creating. Its activities take place in loosely related institutions that are embedded within the culture even while we still maintain our own rules. We seek a mainstreaming of our artists and the avoidance of such labels as "outsiders" or "them" that would apply to something perceived as an "alternative," the result of disruption and separation, instead of in union with this culture.

The creativity of our participants emerges from memories and the images that preside over them. We all have saved images of the world, which reflect the emotional structure of our life. This is the case whether we are intellectually disabled or not and forms the core of who we are. Therefore we have to investigate the constellation of images of this interior imagination. This is achieved initially by engaging in the give and take of communication, almost always without knowing why the particular images that emerge, often repetitive, are there. It is perhaps impossible for the participants, and certainly for ourselves, to impose order on these images. Nevertheless, we have to try. We assume that these images do indeed make sense, that we have to understand and, to whatever extent possible, help the participants understand. From the give and take of communication we seek to achieve a greater openness and fluidity between life and experience, both for ourselves and the participants.



# Methodology for Training

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## Tips and Guidelines – Framework for Trainers/Employees

**It is important, when training people with disabilities, that both trainer and employee/trainee develop and receive the right level of motivation, detailed information and knowledge of the training and the working environment. This dialogue is necessary in order to achieve a planned approach of action and reaction, between the trainer and the trainee, aimed at developing cooperation, trust and safety - the basis of any successful training programme. The starting point of cooperation is trust and safety and it is in that spirit that Count Me In has set up a framework of tips and guidelines based upon the methods at GAIA Museum, for trainers.**

Describing this framework may sound longwinded, and you might think that the framework is extensive, in real life however, most of it will come to you naturally.

By expanding the training framework we have developed a checklist for both the first interview with a potential trainee/employee and the monthly talks between trainer and trainee.



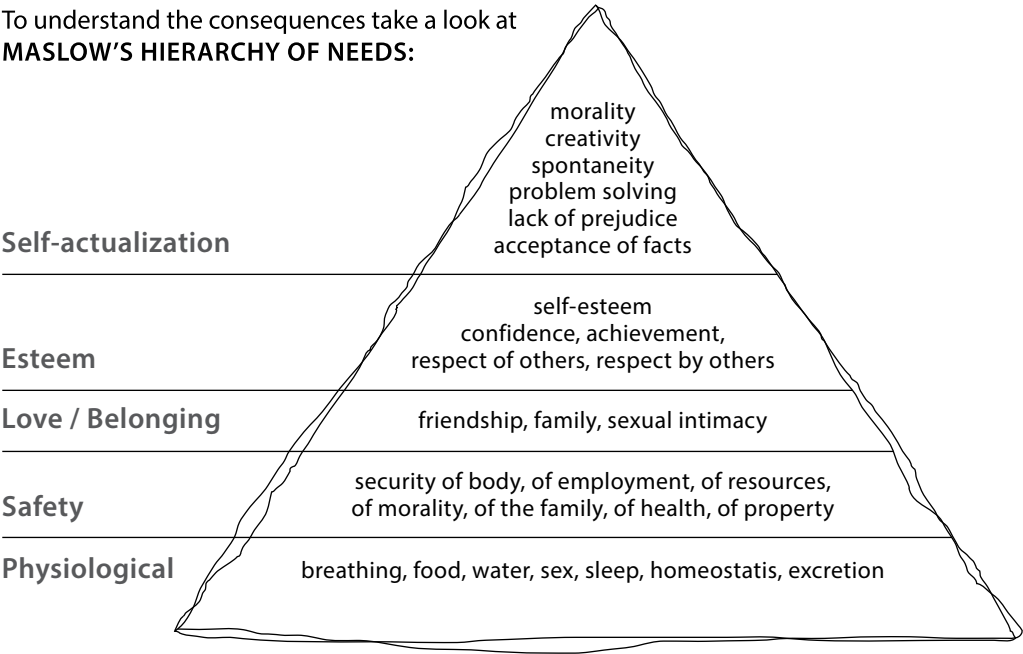


# NEEDS

## CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF TRUST AND SAFETY:

When receiving a person with disabilities (*the trainee/employee*) you have to be aware of the fact that it could be a person who may have several negative experiences of life; in schools because of learning disabilities, not being able to get or to keep a job, having difficulties in establishing a social network, possibly not fitting strictly into the social codes of society. Many also have experience of bullying in school or at work.

To understand the consequences take a look at  
**MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS:**



In their life they may have missed some of the vital elements as described in Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. Their self-esteem can be low, which will bring up questions in their mind such as:



Am I good at anything?  
Am I respected by others? Am I loved?  
Where do I belong? Is there any future for me?  
Will I ever be able to master my own life?





They have often developed an awareness according to other people (*helpers*) – and an ability to read body language in order to answer what they think the helpers want to hear.

It is vital for your cooperation with them that you establish a relationship where the trainee can have trust in you and feels safe and secure. To achieve that, you as a trainer have to consider some important conditions before the first meeting:

- Does the trainee/employee need to have a helper by his side at the first interview?
- Do you need the trainee/employee to have a helper by his side at the first interview?  
This might be helpful for you and in some cases necessary.
- Do you have the possibility to arrange the first meeting in more informal surroundings, with no writing table etc., which might establish a relaxed atmosphere that generates trust and safety?

## GET TO KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

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Your capability to listen as an engaged trainer is the basis for successful cooperation. It is vital for you to get to know how the potential trainee/employee considers themselves and their disability.

Knowledge of the person and their specific disability and needs is the basis of your future ability to act and react.

## Tips and guidelines in interviewing the trainee/employee:

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### What not to do:

- Don't ever start an interview with the question: *What is your exact disability?*
- Don't ever start an interview when you are stressed and worn out.
- Don't ever start an interview if you haven't got the amount of time that is needed.
- Don't ever start an interview if you are mentally somewhere else.
- Don't ever start an interview without being well prepared and knowing what to do.
- Don't ever end an interview without managing both yours and the trainee's expectations.
- Don't ever end an interview without making sure that the trainee is aware of the arrangement.
- Don't ever end an interview without making sure that the trainee knows what to do next.





“ Where do you come from?  
What do you like?  
What do you do in your spare time?  
Do you have some friends  
with common interests? ”

### What to do:

- Do always start the interview as you would do with any other person – with interest in the person sitting in front of you:  
*Where do you come from? What do you like? What do you do in your spare time? Do you have some friends with common interests etc.?*
- Do always be ready to tell part of the story of your life:  
*Where do you come from? What do you like? What do you do in your spare time? What are your interests?*
- Do always make clear what the interview is about and why you ask the questions that you do. Make clear that it is in the interest of the trainee as the fundament of your cooperation and knowing have to complete the job in the best way.
- Do always – in a proper and friendly way - make your roles clear from the start. You are the trainer and the one the trainee shall turn to, but it is not necessary to “boss” the trainee. If the roles are clear from the beginning it will come naturally.
- Do always be aware of the possible need for repetition during the interview. Make sure during the interview that you have a common understanding else repeat what is important.
- Do always line up the important facts of how to act at the place of work in a short and clear way.



**Next step is to know what the trainee/employee is expecting and would like to do as training /work. It is at this point that you naturally can ask more directly about the disability:**

- **Is it a physical disability?** This will mostly be obvious which specific aids and tools the trainee needs and which special arrangements regarding to working place and working hours are required etc. or the trainee can quite easily tell you. Trainees with physical disabilities also can have psychological disabilities and in that case you need mere information.
- **Is the disability psychological or mental?** You will require more specific knowledge. There are large differences in the way you will need to react and the needs of the trainees/employee depending upon if the trainee is for example a person with ADHD, Asperger, Autism, Borderline, Tourette, Downs syndrome etc.:
- **Does the trainee have any problems with noise and crowded places?**
- **Does the trainee have to take many small breaks, maybe take a little walk?**
- **Does the trainee easily get stressed?**
- **What stresses the trainee most and how do you handle that?**
- **Does the trainee have any reading disabilities?**
- **How does the trainee handle information?** Most trainees with disabilities only can handle a few pieces of information at the same time.
- **Does the trainee have a specific way to handle information the best - in words or visual form?**
- **Are there any persons to contact if necessary?**
- **Do also let the trainee know how you react in certain situations.**  
Let the trainee, if possible, tell you of his/hers reaction to different situations and how to solve the situations.

This section contains many questions. The point is that you have to know what the disability is all about in order to know how to act and react, to get the right approach to the trainee, and in the

end how to facilitate the correct type of work for the trainee. If necessary during the interview take a break maybe even a little walk. Just a few minutes can sometimes work wonders.

Keep in mind:



Nothing  
is decided about me without my consent

## **MANAGING YOUR OWN AND THE TRAINEE/EMPLOYEE'S EXPECTATIONS:**

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As the trainer, it is important that you, together with the trainee, are clear about your mutual expectations. You have to set the framework for the training: What can you offer? Specifying the exact conditions for working at the workplace is essential for both parties. By being extremely clear on the expectation (*and overall rules of the workplace*) you reduce the risk of frustration and future conflicts for both parties. In general we recommend that you make a clear written agreement between trainer and trainee that sets the framework of expectations, standards and structure of

the training. This agreement is the basis of mutual cooperation, trust and safety.

There is of course no prescriptive A-Z, how to do manual of ready-made answers. Here are some guidelines with a range of questions that you have to consider when facilitating the work and conditions for the trainee/employee. The following elements will form an important part of your future communication and some of the answers of these questions might be a part of your written agreement.



# TOOLS

## OVERALL SIGNAL:

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People with disabilities also have the need to be seen as individuals, knowing that they are needed and being recognised for their contributions to the organisation.

In that sense they are not different from any other person. Therefore you have to be both available for and appreciative of the trainee/employee.

## STRUCTURE:

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In general people with disabilities need exact and clear information about:

- **Where and when to meet?**
- **What is the exact task for the day?**
- **How to solve the task?**
- **Whom to contact if there are any problems in solving the task?**

## TASK/JOB:

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To succeed, it is important that solving the task is within realistic reach of the trainee/employee. Many trainees will be at their best and most comfortable when solving tasks characterised by routine. There is nothing wrong in challenging people with disabilities, but is of the greatest importance that the task is agreed upon with the trainee/employee and realistically within their reach to solve. It makes no sense and will only provide problems if the task is too

difficult to solve causing the trainee/employee to fail because they may lack the necessary skills, aid or the workplace is wrong. An example: If the trainee/employee has a fear of crowded places it don't make sense and will be impossible to facilitate work in a crowded place with many possible contacts and questions from visitors. Another example: If the trainee finds it hard to handle more than one piece of information at a time, you have to find a way to handle that.

## SKILLS, INFORMATION AND AID:

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Overall you will have to answer these questions:

- **Is the job and the information about it clear?**
- **Does the trainee/employee have the necessary skills to solve the job?**
- **Is the trainee mentally and/or physically capable of solving the job?**
- **To what degree can the trainee take some responsibility?**
- **Does the trainee need some intermediate aims during the day?**
- **Is it necessary to repeat the aim and job during the day?**
- **Do you have to follow up on a regular basis during the day?**

“ Where and when to meet?  
What is the exact task  
for the day?  
How to solve the task?  
Whom to contact if there  
are any problems in  
solving the task? ”





## WORKPLACE:

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Regarding the workplace you have to answer these questions:

- Is the workplace prepared physically?
- Are the required aid and tools present?
- Is the workplace too crowded and too noisy?
- Is the workplace isolated or does the trainee have the possibility to meet colleagues and to socialise?

## LUNCHTIME AND OTHER BREAKS:

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The trainee might need more breaks during the day:

- How do you include the trainee at lunchtime?
- Is there the possibility of more breaks during the day?
- Is it possible to take a walk if needed?

## INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION:

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The cooperation between you as the trainer and the trainee/employee depends upon your communication, and the capability of the trainee/employee to handle information:

- Do you always meet the trainee/employee with an open and friendly body language?
- Does the trainee have any reading disabilities?
- Are there any support or technical aid for solving that problem?
- Consider visualising the communication and use drawings or pictures on papers and boards instead of words?



Could you benefit from a short meeting in the morning to talk about the job of the upcoming day and if there are any problems, questions or important information?

## EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT AND SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS:

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An exact and visible start and end of the day can be quite useful for both trainer and trainee/employee. Consider the following:

- **Could you benefit from a short meeting in the morning to talk about the job of the upcoming day and if there are any problems, questions or important information.**
- **Would it be of use for both you and the trainee to have a clear ending of the day in little 5 minute meeting and talk about the day and eventually repeat important information.**

## TALKS:

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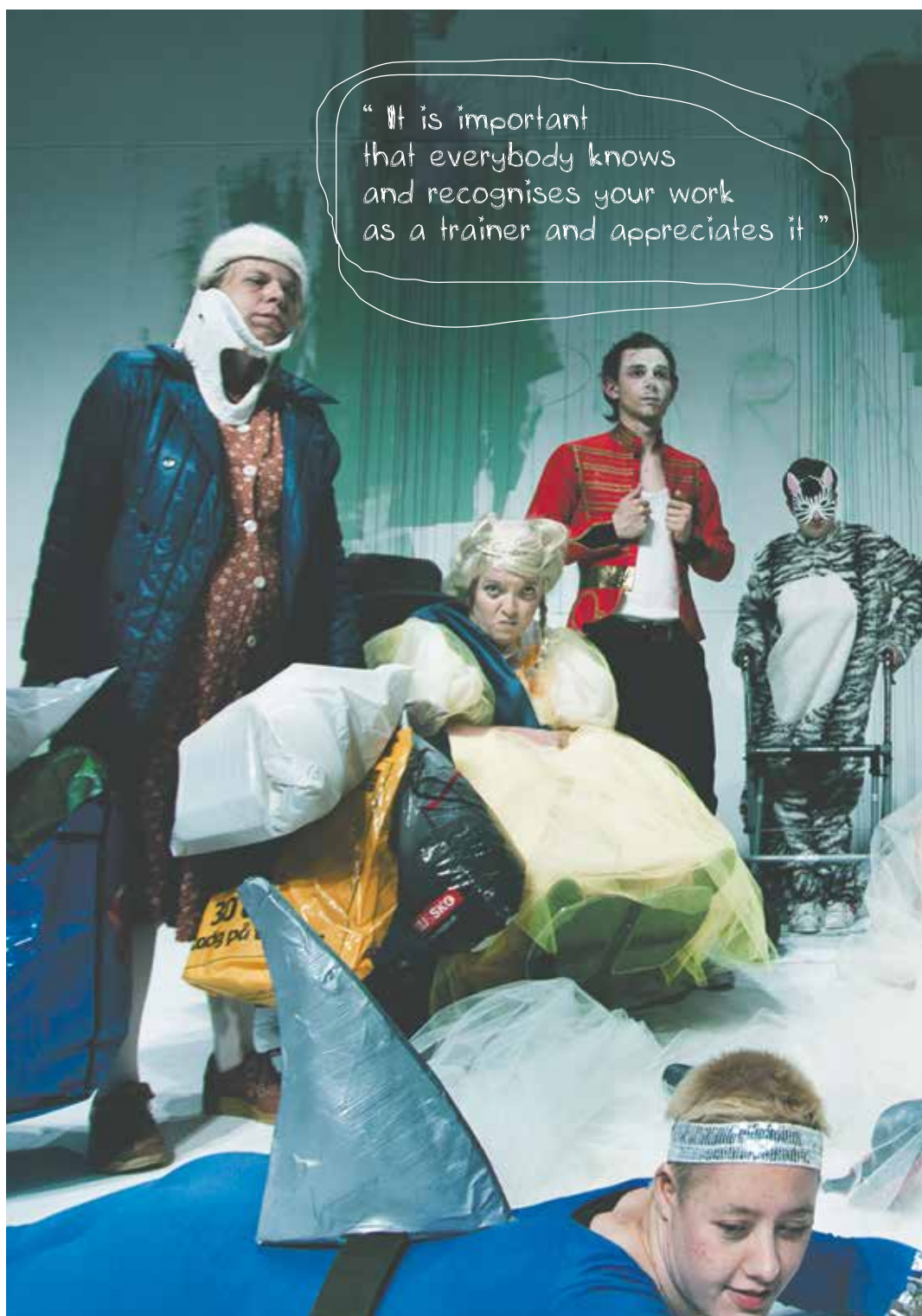
It will be useful for you and the trainee to have well-structured and scheduled talks once a month. It might be of importance that the talks are relaxed.

- **How does the trainee feel? In the job? Social? Personal?**
- **How is the job solution working out? Colleagues?**
- **Are there any problems to solve? And how can they be solved?**
- **Are there any special needs that have to be handled?**

Notice that it is important on the one side to open towards the trainee/employee and on the other hand to be able to pinpoint the problems that have to be solved.



"It is important  
that everybody knows  
and recognises your work  
as a trainer and appreciates it"



# SPREAD YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND GET BACKUP

Even if everything is running smoothly, it is still very important to inform others of how the training process is developing. Not to do so may even risk acting in a way detrimental to the trainee/employee. It is vital that you share your knowledge. You must work in cooperation with your management to ensure that everybody in the organisation has the correct and necessary information. It is important that everybody knows and recognises your work as a trainer and appreciates it. This is also a shortcut for you to receive backup if you in anyway should face a situation that you find hard to handle.

The basis of these tips and guidelines are written from the fact that people with disabilities are a resource and not a problem. We just have to be aware of their needs and develop knowledge on how to give people with disabilities the possibility to participate in the society – including training and employment.



## ADDITION

The Count Me In team believe that this framework will be a useful and operational tool for trainers working with people with disabilities. However your way of

working is dictated by the exact disability of the trainee and what your company offers the trainee/employee. In this case this framework is meant as in inspiration.



# Count Me In

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Examples of vocational training for people with disabilities in the cultural sector

**Art and cultural institutions are places for people to engage in critical education in values, reflection, personal development, and social coexistence. Cultural institutions must build on their intrinsic values and constitute a sufficiently human and stimulating environment to foster the development of people with different abilities, becoming a model of normalisation, dialogue and social integration. Many institutions have developed programs providing access to knowledge and culture for people with disabilities, as they try to open up to new audiences with educational programs accessible to everybody.**

## MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

### Reina Sofia Museum

The Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid is an example of a museum committed to promoting universal access through continuously improving their visitor services as well as offering new educational programmes specifically designed to meet the particular needs of different audiences. Conect@ is a programme which stretches over several months each year. In its weekly meetings, the museum qualifies the contributions of people with disabilities. A workgroup consisting of 10 people with disabilities, 3 educators, specialised in accessibility and a number of professionals from the Carlos Castilla Del Pino Occupational Centre collaborate on an

on-going basis in the design, production and evaluation of the project. This programme aims at exploring new strategies for personal development and the social inclusion of a group of adults with intellectual disabilities. One of the axes of the programme is the critical reflection on the Museum space and its conditions of accessibility, both from an architectural and sensory and communicational point of view.

[www.museoreinasofia.es/en](http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en)



[www.artetmarges.be/index.php/en/](http://www.artetmarges.be/index.php/en/)

## Art en Marges' Museum

The Art & Marges' Museum in Brussels was established in the arts and cultural sector some 25 years ago, for the identification and promotion of the so-called 'outsider art'. The term 'outsider' is their regular approach, so they do not focus on disability. The museum promotes artworks made by artists with and without disabilities or mental health issues - some of them have experience in photography or music - but with difficulties in accessing the professional market. At Art & Marges, artists who are outside of the contemporary art scene meet, without distinction based on disability or social status.

In the museum they do not highlight the disability or mental health status of the artists whose works are exhibited, but only provide information related to their "*artistic impulse*" explains Sarah Kokot, responsible for the educational service. The museum has a permanent collection, which changes regularly, and organises temporary exhibitions every three months on a specific theme. In 2012, they organised the exhibition 'Quoi de neuf? (*What's new?*)', which showed the artworks from Belgian artists, from different backgrounds.

[www.thegalleryonthecorner.org.uk/](http://www.thegalleryonthecorner.org.uk/)

## Gallery on the Corner

The Gallery on the Corner in Edinburgh is a commercial gallery and studio based on a model of 'art as support' with an 'art as sustainable business' approach. It is an inspiring commercial gallery and studio in the heart of Edinburgh's gallery district. It represents and supports artists with physical or mental health conditions, or from a disadvantaged background. The gallery also offers employment and training opportunities in commercial art and retail for adults with autism. The commercial gallery and studio can both be hired for events. It also offers creative workshops and artwork services in which exhibitions of trainee paintings and prints can be organised to brighten up a company's business premises as well the long-term hire of artwork.

The principal objective for running this social enterprise is to provide real work experience in real work environments for adults with autism as part of a route to employment outside of the organisation. The gallery has two social purposes; firstly, to provide trainees with transferable skills to take with them after their one-year traineeship, this might be into self-employment as artists, further training at college or university, or other supported or main stream employment. The second social purpose is to represent artists with disabilities and mental health conditions and give them a platform to sell their work in a high-profile location in a major capital city.

# THEATRE //////////////////////////////////////

## Open Theatre Company (OTC)

Open Theatre Company (OTC) was established in 1984 and is based in the West Midlands in the UK. It works with young people with learning disabilities, using a unique theatre practice called Shystering which has been developed from experimental actor training and theatre making techniques and is principally a non-verbal/physical approach to actor-training and theatre-making.

The theatre focuses on young people of school leaving age with the aim of better preparing them for the world of work, further training and independent living. For the individual they choose how to communicate and respond within the drama activities, beginning very simply with their own joy or shyness or nervousness. This then becomes more playful as they explore how to project that response bigger, or smaller, or change it into a new emotional response. For the group they are developing skills in watching each other, listening, giving each other time and space to work, how to interact and engage with

each other, how to respond to each other and for many how to work in imaginative contexts and ‘act’ with each other.

The impact recorded by staff includes personal growth, improved social interaction not only within the group but also with others in the school and improved education targets: speaking, listening, turn-taking, concentration levels, fine motor skills. There is a wider social impact that has only begun to be evaluated – how these young people conduct themselves in contexts outside of the sessions and school environments. In the UK 4 in 5 young people with “moderate” learning disabilities find themselves without an avenue to contribute to society, on completing their education. The figure for those with more complex needs is even higher. OTC is pioneering an action plan to help redress this inequality through cultural engagement.

[www.opentheatre.co.uk](http://www.opentheatre.co.uk)



DANCE //////////////////////////////////////

Freefall Dance Company

Freefall Dance Company was established in 2002 and evolved from a long-term partnership between former Birmingham Royal Ballet dancers and staff from Fox Hollies Performing Arts College, Birmingham in the UK. It was formed to provide a training and performance platform for highly gifted young people of school leaving age with severe learning difficulties, who are invited to join the company in recognition of their talent, creativity and enthusiasm for dance.

The company meets once a week, and for intensive periods during holiday times, at Birmingham Royal Ballet's studios with the two-hour sessions divided equally between ballet technique training and choreographic work for forthcoming performances. In this way Freefall's approach combines the best of community dance practice - with its principles of empowerment, creativity and ownership - with the best that ballet can offer with its pillars of tradition, attention to detail and discipline. Freefallers gain accreditation for their skills and knowledge, through the company's Open College Network 'Excellence in Ballet' vocational qualification and the Arts Council England's National Arts Award.

As for the future, the Company's Director Lee Fisher says;  
*"I want them to do more of the teaching, because that was so wonderful for everybody and made such a big impact on the groups that the dancers worked with. In terms of long term, one day Freefall needs to be a semi-professional company, at least!"*

[www.brb.org.uk/4283](http://www.brb.org.uk/4283)

The Palladio Association

The Palladio Association based in Segovia near Madrid has a theatre company, theatre school and an employment centre. The Theatre Company started 16 years ago, and has put on performances all over Europe. It has participated in TV series and adverts and its entire staff has some kind of disability, making it unique. The company's performance contributes to the financing resources of the Association. Theatre school Palladio: The school was founded in 2004 and is free. People with or without disabilities go to this school with the objective to achieve an effective integration. After the training they can be part of the Theatre Company and also with the possibility of being employed by the Special Employment Center of Palladio Arte. This centre aims to integrate people with disabilities into the labour market, through artistic creation and theatre performances.

[paladioarte.asociaciones.segovia.es/](http://paladioarte.asociaciones.segovia.es/)



# ART WORKSHOPS

## The Hungarian Special Arts Workshop

The Hungarian Special Arts Workshop (Magyar Speciális Művészeti Műhely Egyesület) promotes the artistic activity of people with intellectual disabilities, raising the standard of their artistic practice and spreading special techniques. The association aims to give people living either with their families or in institutions, the opportunity of active participation in artistic activities and exhibiting, and by this, to develop self-expression and social integration.

The starting point for the association was a movement that strove to improve the life quality of intellectually disabled people and to involve as many of them as possible into various artistic activities on the basis of their interests and abilities. In 1986 folk dance and song groups of intellectually disabled people were formed. Later on, arts and crafts and fine arts exhibitions were connected. By 1995 they had developed into international cultural festivals including 8 branches of the arts (singing, folk-dance, standard-, Latin- and modern dance, reciting prose and poetry, acting, puppetry and music). A crafts and fine arts exhibition is connected to the performances. Since 1998 the number of active participants in the cultural festivals has reached 1000-1200 people on behalf of 75-80 institutions.



[www.msmme.hu](http://www.msmme.hu)

The association organises arts and crafts and fine arts camps for intellectually disabled artists and their pedagogues to acquire basic and deeper knowledge and skills. The special professional training has been organised annually in Eger since 1994, where experienced artists help participating pedagogues to learn the special techniques and the fundamental methods of certain branches of art. The aim is, that the pedagogues become not only simple demonstrators but artists with original thinking.

The association is an obvious success story. The art workshops together with the culture festivals create awareness of and acclamation for people with disabilities and their artistic work. The festivals and other activities are therefore a great example of promoting outsider art - whatever visual arts or other art forms - as a possible artistic employment.



## The Créahm

The Créahm is an association founded in 1979 by Luc Boulangé in Liège, Belgium, to promote the full inclusion in society of people with learning disabilities through the arts, and to advocate for their right to access to culture. The Créahm was conceived according to the idea that every person with a disability has the opportunity and the right to access to the artistic creation if his / her talent is promoted, encouraged and recognised.

The Créahm organises workshops in the field of visual and performing arts to help artists develop their artistic skills. The plastic arts workshop runs from Monday to Thursday and helps develop the creativity of participants through artworks, including drawing, painting and sculpture. The drama and circus sessions take place four and two times a week, respectively. Participants learn about articulation, vocabulary, syntax, and self-space. They also develop movement coordination and motor skills to increase the ability to concentrate. The purpose is to make people responsible for their choices and thus expand their own theatrical language; the role of the monitor is to give tools to advance their research. The dance and music workshops aim to expand the body language, and participants also compose and create choreographies in collaboration with other workshops. During the music sessions participants learn about technical skills and are responsible for their own instrument.

The Day Centre and the Madmusée Museum are, together with the workshops called the 'Great Créahm'. The 'Day Centre of Créahm' in Liège is a non-profit organisation which complements other services from the association. It accommodates 16 people with disabilities daily under an agreement with the Walloon Agency for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (AWIPH). The museum Madmusée was founded in 2003 and works for the promotion of artists with learning disabilities. It has an international collection of works made by artists with disabilities.

[www.creahm.be/fr/programmation-6&actualite\\_40.html#.Uq7vEE2A3IV](http://www.creahm.be/fr/programmation-6&actualite_40.html#.Uq7vEE2A3IV)



# MEDIA ////////////////////////////////////

## Glad Foundation

Glad Foundation based in Denmark is driven by a single powerful idea - that people with disabilities, can both produce and deliver relevant and original contributions to culture and society at large.

It all began with TV-Glad, the first TV-station in the world run by and for people with learning disabilities, which went on the air in June 1999. The original vision was concerned with creating a better quality of life and ensuring freedom of expression for people with learning disabilities. Today the goal is broad inclusion in society with particular emphasis on the job market. TV Glad have grown from being a small TV-station to a company with many different activities, within education and commercial production.

Glad Vocational School offers a 3-year course for young people with disabilities in 7 areas: TV/video, Radio, Animation, Theatre, Design, Service and Kitchen. Glad Media Encompasses all media departments – TV, Radio, Animation and

Web. Here programmes are produced for our TV transmissions, the homepage another social media areas. Glad Media also encompasses Glad Production, which produces media for external customers. Glad Design creates graphic solutions, illustrations and clothes, spaces, textiles, furniture and print design. Glad Design is easily recognisable with its highly colourful, sensual and raw visual style. Glad Theatre is Denmark’s first professional theatre for, by and with people with disabilities. Glad Theatre creates unconventional theatre that challenges its actors and its audiences. Glad Food is responsible for high-quality in-house food for all TV Glad employees, as well as running 2 restaurants, “Café Glad”, a “lunch-catering”, and a daily cantina in a private business with 400 employees.

Glad Foundation is a remarkable organisation. Today there are nearly 200 employees, and 70 students at the four local departments in Denmark. Besides the basic creation and vocational training, Glad Foundation gives people with disabilities a voice and expression of their own in the society and in democracy. In that sense Glad Foundation is not only the everyday life and identity of a large number of employees and students with disabilities it also is the very essence of the UN Charter for Human Rights and the EU Charter put into practice.



[www.gladfonden.dk](http://www.gladfonden.dk)



## Puoltaja

Puoltaja is a magazine made by people with autism based in Finland. 'Puoltaja' means 'advocate' in Finnish, and it is a webzine entirely written and produced by volunteers on the autistic spectrum, most of them with Asperger's Syndrome. Janne Fredriksson from the Finnish Association for Autism and Asperger's Syndrome came up with the idea when he realised that many people with autism were active writing in online forums and social media, but they wanted to have a wider channel where they could develop their own stories for a broader audience.

Puoltaja is published four times a year and has about 2,000 readers. Its main purpose is to advocate for autism culture, raise awareness about autism among the public and the mainstream media, and give voice to the opinions and positions of people with autism based on a human rights oriented approach. It also aims to challenge some predominant stereotypes about autism.

For the voluntary staff who works as editors, Puoltaja provides practical skills that could help them in the labour market.

"In Finland, the mainstream media seem to be more and more interested in interviewing people on the autism spectrum rather than parents or professionals. More and more people understand that many people with autism are able and want to speak about themselves and work as self-advocates." Explains Janne Fredriksson, Founder of Puoltaja



In Finland, the mainstream media seem to be more and more interested in interviewing people on the autism spectrum rather than parents or professionals. More and more people understand that many people with autism are able and want to speak about themselves and work as self-advocates

Janne Fredriksson, Founder of Puoltaja

[www.puoltaja.fi/](http://www.puoltaja.fi/)

# GARDENING AND PUBLIC SPACES //

## Jardin de Wiltz

Jardin de Wiltz uses plants, terraces, water, sculptures, paths and stone fields to form a living 2.5-hectare size artwork, made in collaboration with disabled and unemployed people. The project was initiated in 1983 by artists from Luxembourg using new models of cultural work in the public and social field. Today the garden is maintained by the sheltered workshop of Cooperations, who provide work and income for about 65 disabled and non-disabled people.

Cooperations was founded in 1990 as an organisational platform for the Jardin de Wiltz, and has permitted dynamic further development for a range of cultural and socio-educational projects addressing a wide audience and promoting interrelation between art and social participation. Cooperations were created as a rotating door between social exclusion and social, cultural and professional participation. Cooperations developed its public services in the areas of culture, tourism or gastronomy. The spectrum of audiences reaches

from school children, young people, inhabitants of the region, tourists, senior citizens, people with disability and migrants.

Jardin de Wiltz is a magnificent cultural site created by artists in cooperation with disabled and marginalized people. As a great example of a socio-cultural project, it demonstrates the possibilities and the resources of disabled and marginalised people by creating sites, activities and services at a very high level for the benefit and pleasure for the whole of society. Benefits for the disabled people in terms of education and employment are obvious.

[www.cooperations.lu/de/7/cooperations/](http://www.cooperations.lu/de/7/cooperations/)



# THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES //

## Creative Spirit

Creative Spirit offers full time work for people with intellectual disabilities within the creative industries of Australia. They work with a broad range of areas, from advertising agencies to architectural firms, film to fashion, theatre and dance companies to music and production studios and harness the inspirational tagline, what could be more creative than being different?

By 2021, the Creative Spirit programme initiated by Droga5 and co-developed with Break Thru People Solutions, an employment agency specialising in placing those with physical or developmental challenges, aims to get every one of the 32,000 registered creative companies in Australia to commit to the trial of a person with a disability. Ultimately, this will make Australia's creative community the largest employer of these extraordinary people.

Behind the concept is Droga5's creative chairman David Nobay, who said the seed of the idea began 15 years ago when in 1990's Melbourne a young staffer with Down's Syndrome had a profound effect in the workplace.

[www.creativespirit.org.au](http://www.creativespirit.org.au)

*"It always stuck in my mind as such a positive thing," he said. "With all the ego and craziness in this business, he had such a settling effect on everyone."*

Nobay experienced this levelling effect again when two years ago Droga5 employed a staff member through Break Thru. *"When the team got to about 20 people we felt it was the right time," Nobay said. "Lloyd was painfully shy and I thought it would certainly be interesting. We took him on trial and it was incredible how quickly his personality changed."* Notably it was Lloyd's carer who observed that the creative space of an advertising agency was a unique and refreshingly relaxed environment.

”

Lloyd was painfully shy and I thought it would certainly be interesting. We took him on trial and it was incredible how quickly his personality changed

David Nobay

# SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

## The Dreams Academy Project

The Dreams Academy Project based in Istanbul was initiated in 2008 by the Alternative Life Association (AYDER) with the cooperation of the UNDP (the United Nations Development Programme), Ministry of Development and the Vodafone Turkey Foundation; with an aim to enable young people with disabilities and social disadvantages to have a “barrier-free” life.

Dreams Academy is a model project, which provides opportunities of equal participation with an “art for all” approach. This is created through training and employment opportunities such as free music, film-making, dance, photography, painting, design and yoga workshops and programmes which provide progressive pathways into employment and real life jobs.

One pathway into employment is the Academy’s Social Inclusion Band, which offers the opportunity to build a career in music by performing at popular venues and music festivals, sharing the stage with national and internationally renowned music artists. The band is formed from talented young graduates of the Dreams Academy music workshops who are accompanied by volunteering professional musicians.

Another is Düşler Film & Photography & Graphic, a social enterprise production crew formed from Dreams Academy graduates working alongside professional volunteers. It’s an income generating model to enable disabled and socially disadvantaged young people to develop professional skills, to make artistic productions and to earn an income within the creative sector. The team film music videos, commercials, concerts, documentaries and promotional films for commercial businesses. They also shoot photographs for catalogues, products, leaflets and concerts and create graphic designs for a variety of printed materials.

In 2012, the Academy’s Dreams Kitchen opened which is also operated as a social business model to provide young disabled students with training, vocational experience and career opportunities in the culinary sector. So far its young participants have already received mentoring from famous Turkish TV chefs, whilst the Vodafone Foundation is just one a number of corporate catering contracts which the academy has secured to bring in income to sustain the project.

[www.duslerakademisi.org](http://www.duslerakademisi.org)



# VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES //////////

## AspIT

AspIT is a customised model of education for young people with Asperger's Syndrome. Nine colleges in Denmark offer three year vocational training with focus on IT. During the training the students have the possibility to acquire skills at the same level as ordinary vocational programmes. They can study in a calm environment with a low student to teacher ratio. Students are helped with internships in appropriate environments and receive individualized training aimed at the young student's interests and talents. The aim is to help them to find a job or continue education elsewhere.

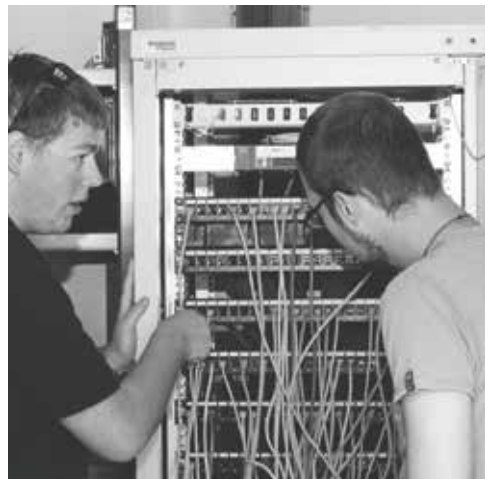
AspIT's position is that education / training is a qualification process that strengthens identity and development. This process develops self-esteem, self-confidence, a meaningful life, an experience of being valuable to society when you make use of abilities and become an active part of the community. AspIT's education and learning environment is characterised by safety, well-being and development. AspIT's main purpose is to get young people into the ordinary labour market. AspIT can document that 80% of the students are employed within their focused talent after completing their programme.

The basic idea is that young people who leave the school are directed towards employment in the IT field, in a way that matches their skills and interests. The students all have excellent knowledge of Danish (read and write), English (read) and mathematics (logical), as well as a keen interest in IT. They have detailed skills in specific subject areas within Information Technology. They are skilled and focused on tasks, they are very loyal and often have

by nature an IQ level above average. To ensure the best conditions around organised internships AspIT offers a special Mentor Course to the company who takes the intern. The trainees are employed in all kinds of jobs - programmer, web-developer, IT Support, picture, audio, video, IT administration, economy etc.

AspIT is a remarkable idea with a documented rate of success, where 80% of students achieve employment. The mindset of AspIT of specialising on one particular group of young people with disabilities, with a 100% focus on their skills and talents and their needs for support and mentoring, is the basis on which the success is built. The message to learn from AspIT is: keep total focus on the special skills and talents and the need for support.

[www.aspit.dk](http://www.aspit.dk)



# MUSIC FESTIVALS ////////////////////

## Sølund Musik-Festival

Sølund Musik-Festival, is an annual, 3 day event, which has taken place every June in Sølund near Skanderborg in Denmark since 1986. The festival is the biggest of its kind in the world for people with disabilities. Sølund as such is an event for people with severe physical and intellectual disabilities. It is like any other festival, with bands, entertainment, food and drink stands. Sølundfestivalen might just be the most joyful festival in Denmark with an atmosphere full of laughter and smiles. This year (2013) the festival was visited by over 16,000 people – the vast majority of whom were people with disabilities - who could listen to the music of over 40 different bands. The festival has about 60 sponsors.

[www.solundfestivalen.dk](http://www.solundfestivalen.dk)

The festival is manned by a skeleton crew for eleven months of the year and expands to 2200 volunteers, 150 of which are people with disabilities during the festival. The volunteers with disabilities carry out a wide variety of jobs from setting up stands, setting up furniture, packaging lunch packs, organising food and beverage and keeping the ground clean from garbage. To be a volunteer you have to be able to do your job correctly and on time.

The Sølundfestival is an extraordinary event, which could be transferred to similar festivals, exhibitions etc. People with disabilities can be a very valuable resource as volunteers. It gives them the chance to be part of the event, generating self-confidence. That is the essence of the festival: to be able to take part, to be useful, to contribute with your specific skills, whatever they may be and to gain respect and pride in who you are.



### THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE FESTIVAL:

To be able to take part,  
to be useful, to contribute  
with your specific skills,  
whatever they may be  
and to gain respect  
and pride in who you are

# Credits

The Count Me In Publication has been written and produced by the following partners:

## **GAIA Museum Outsider Art , Denmark**

GAIA Museum is a cultural institution that offers cultural experiences and education to the general public. It is specialised in art by people who come from a different reality than the mainstream, such as people with learning disabilities, psychiatric patients or other groups that may be excluded from the many institutions in society.

[www.gaia.dk](http://www.gaia.dk)

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## **Debajo del Sombrero, Spain**

Debajo del Sombrero exists to provide a platform for people with learning disabilities to be involved in and have access to artistic and cultural activities. The organisation runs several different programmes around Madrid that focus on the integration of special needs groups in the contemporary scene of art training, production and consumption. It is devoted to making visible the diversity of artistic expression and explore innovative ways of combining the skills of artists with and without disabilities.

[www.debajodelsombrero.org](http://www.debajodelsombrero.org)

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## **The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, UK**

The Herbert, is Coventry's award winning museum and art gallery, which celebrates the city's culture, history and arts. A registered educational charity, the Herbert is also host to Coventry's archives. The museum's contribution to the Count Me In project was led by Herbert Media team. Herbert Media is an accredited vocational learning centre that is approved to deliver a variety of qualifications. It specialises in delivering progressive creative learning and social inclusion programmes for marginalised groups, in making multi-media productions with social and cultural themes and in project collaborations.

[www.theherbert.org](http://www.theherbert.org)

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## **Foreningsfællesskabet Ligeværd (Union of Associations for Equality), Denmark**

Foreningsfællesskabet Ligeværd is a national umbrella organization in which members work holistically towards creating better educational, working, housing and social conditions for people with special needs. Ligeværd works both politically – constantly informing and influencing elected officials – and practically – supporting efforts to create educational opportunities, leisure time activities, suitable living spaces and appropriate jobs for all people with special needs.

[www.ligevaerd.dk](http://www.ligevaerd.dk)

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## Autism-Europe

Autism-Europe is an international association of 85 member associations of people with autism and their families across Europe, in 30 countries. Its main objective is to advance the rights of people with autism and to help them improve their quality of life.

Autism-Europe works with its members to advocate for the rights and social inclusion of people with autism towards the European institutions. It monitors European laws and policies. It also promotes adapted education and evidence-based therapies, and supports the exchange of information, good practices and experience in the field of autism.

[www.autismeurope.org](http://www.autismeurope.org)

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eLearning Studios provided the eLearning solutions that accompany this publication which can be found at:  
[www.count-me-in.eu](http://www.count-me-in.eu)

[www.e-learningstudios.com](http://www.e-learningstudios.com)

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## Elderberry AB, Sweden

Elderberry AB undertakes educational development and strategic studies, authoring, testing, editing and publishing within youth, adult, teacher and VET education often with socio-cultural and urban implications. The company is experienced with traditional methods for educational material as with eLearning and eCulture. Elderberry AB have coordinated the material for this publication and edited the content.

[www.elderberry.nu](http://www.elderberry.nu)

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Obviously,  
because of my disability,  
I need assistance.  
But I have always tried  
to overcome the limitations  
of my condition and lead  
as full a life as possible.  
I have traveled the world,  
from the Antarctic to  
zero gravity

- Stephen Hawking