The path to the independent life: experiences, opinions and suggestions from people with intellectual disabilities in an inclusive research project

Judit Fullana, Maria Pallisera, Carol Puyalto, Montserrat Vilà, Tània Coll, Josep Comas, Anna Cornellà, Àlex Fontané, Cristina González, Llorenç Riu (University of Girona, Catalonia, Spain)

2013-14: RESEARCH ON THE INDEPENDENT LIFE OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

MEETING 1
We talked about our and others’ experiences referred to the independent living.
A researcher collected our ideas on a white board.

MEETING 2
We talked about different kinds of homes (residence, residence-home, independent house, family house).
We did it through films and videos.

MEETING 3
We discussed in small group about different cases of people with ID wanting to live independently.
Two practical cases were presented. Each one explained the situation of people that wanted to live more independently. One of them lived at home, the other in a small residence-home.

MEETING 4
We discussed about the barriers and the supports for the independent living.
We used pictures, and we worked in a focus group.

DISSEMINATION OF THE EXPERIENCE
MEETINGS 6 and 7: We worked together on the presentation for a summer course conference.
We did a conference and many professionals, who are working on services addressed to people with disabilities, attended it.

MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE ADVISORS ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT LIVING

BARRIERS
• Mistrust from people on our possibilities
• Overprotection from families and professionals
• To face daily routines
• Fear of leaving the family home
• Lack of government economic help and support to live independently
• Sometimes professionals don’t help adequately

SUPPORTS
• Support and accompaniment from the family
• Receiving training from professionals that help us be more independent
• Support at work
• Enough money
• Having friends/ having a couple.

PROPOSALS
• Let us be heard and taken into account
• Government should support us to live independently, providing houses and helping us to pay them.
• Less overprotection from families and letting us take decisions
• Professionals helping us to lose fear of taking decisions
• Educate the society on the respect for the diversity
• Let us make some mistakes
• Dissemination of the good experiences. Professionals without fear of explaining them
• Individualized support
• Having opportunities to create our own family
• Having a worthy wage so we can emancipate ourselves and create a family.