



**7TH IRCHST 2025**

**PROCEEDING:**

**7TH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH  
CONFERENCE ON HUMANITIES, SOCIAL  
SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY 2025  
(7TH IRCHST 2025)**



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# PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that I present the proceedings of the 7th International Research Conference on Humanities, Social Sciences and Technology 2025 (7th IRCHST 2025), held on 4th–5th October 2025 at Yannaty Hotel, Hat Yai, Thailand. This conference marks another significant milestone in our ongoing effort to provide a dynamic platform for scholars, researchers, academicians, and practitioners to exchange knowledge, ideas, and innovative research in the fields of humanities, social sciences, and technology.

Since its inception, the IRCHST series has aimed to foster academic collaboration and encourage interdisciplinary research that addresses the evolving challenges of the modern world. The 7th edition continues this tradition, featuring thought-provoking discussions, insightful presentations, and groundbreaking research findings that reflect the diversity and richness of global academic inquiry.

We are honored to have participants from various countries contributing their valuable research to this conference. Their work not only enriches our understanding of different cultural and academic perspectives but also strengthens the spirit of international cooperation in advancing education and research excellence.

On behalf of the organizing committee, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to all presenters, participants, reviewers, and committee members who have dedicated their time and expertise to make this event a success. Special thanks are also due to our co-organizers, partners, and sponsors for their unwavering support and commitment to academic advancement.

It is our hope that the research presented in these proceedings will serve as a meaningful reference and inspiration for future studies in the areas of humanities, social sciences, and technology. May this collection of papers continue to encourage collaboration, critical thinking, and innovation among scholars and professionals around the world.

Congratulation and Thank You.

Sincerely,

**Ts. Inv. Dr. Wan Azani Wan Mustafa**

*Chairman*

*7th International Research Conference on Humanities,  
Social Sciences and Technology 2025 (7th IRCHST 2025)*



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**PENGAPLIKASIAN REALITI TERIMBUH (AR) DALAM PENDIDIKAN ISLAM...568**

*Nur Syasya Sabrina Md Yusof, Hafizhah Zulkifli, Zamri Mahamod*

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## A PEDAGOGICAL AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROJECT AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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**Abstract:** *Vocational rehabilitation is designed to promote the qualification and inclusion in the labor market. Several countries have implemented state programs to support both people with disabilities and employers. The education system, including higher education, cannot remain on the sidelines of this reality, bearing in mind that employability is an aim of training, which is critical in Students with Specific Educational Needs (SSEN). This research analysed the implementation of a seven-month funded project to support SSEN (with hearing, visual and mental health limitations) at a Portuguese Higher Education Institution (HEI). Five students, still attending degrees or recently graduated, benefited from employability support sessions combined with psycho-pedagogical support, focused on interests and life projects, the development of personal and social skills, and connection with the community (employment entities). Therefore, the direct intervention (by a psychologist and a social educator) included, above all, career counselling, developing self-knowledge, searching for job offers and preparing for applications (e.g., CV preparation), culminating in the creation of a theoretical-practical employability support manual in accessible formats. Public and private entities were also contacted and made aware of the situation, professional rehabilitation services were publicized (e.g., digital flyer) and socio-professional opportunities were created. According to case follow-up and satisfaction questionnaires, the majority significantly valued the support of the project: they were very satisfied (n=4)/ satisfied (n=1) according to the objectives; and considered it indispensable (n=3)/ reported that was very important (n=2) that it continues. It should be noted that transition to working life/employability, as well as guaranteeing financial autonomy, has an impact on all life dimensions, promoting also social inclusion. Projects in this area, with joint responsibility of HEI and employers, are crucial, but more resources (human, technical and financial) must be guaranteed, and the continuity and scope of the initiatives must be ensured.*

**Keywords:** *Vocational Rehabilitation, Students with Specific Educational Needs (SSEN), Higher Education, Labor Inclusion*

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## Introduction

Training for working life must go across different age groups, with particular emphasis on secondary and higher education, the stages preceding into the job market. For Students with Specific Educational Needs (SSEN), there are additional demands, clearly expressed in their high unemployment rates. Vocational rehabilitation is designed to promote the qualification and inclusion in the labor market. Several countries have implemented state programs to support both people with disabilities and employers (Fundación ONCE & ILO Global Business and Disability Network, 2019; Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, 2025).

The inclusive employability began as a matter of charity and has become, in recent decades, a question of solidarity. However, it should be understood in the sense of using this population full potential and, more than that, it is still necessary to affirm it as a demand of citizenship – totally aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations [UN], 2015). Today we are witnessing an evolution in social and employment policies aimed at the group of citizens with specific needs (disability), reflected in the expansion of employability opportunities, but it is not enough. International, and national (Portugal), legislative changes regarding professional inclusion and the people with disability rights, with incentives for hiring and adapting to the job – modalities, such as supported employment, inclusive employer branding, support products attribution and job quotas (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, 2025) –, are fundamental to create the conditions for promoting good practices and make a difference.

Given the impact on the quality of life and social inclusion, employability is, already, a main concern of some Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The aim of this work is to explore the impact of employability support for SSEN, as part of a funded project, developed at a HEI in central Portugal, between January and July 2023. The general objective was promoting the well-being, academic success, autonomy and development of skills that facilitate the academic and professional inclusion of SSEN. As might be expected, given the specific characteristics around employability (mainly sought out by students in the final year of their degree) and the possible greater difficulties inherent in the process of adapting to higher education (first year students), most of the activities centred on the psycho-pedagogical area (74%) (e.g., define measures to support learning; help with academic works and study methods). The experiences reported here do, however, refer to employability cases (26%).

## Literature Review

### *Transition to the Job Market in Students with Specific Educational Needs*

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) links education and the work world, unlocking the potential of young people and adults for a better future. However, around 267 million young people are not in employment, education or training (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO, 2022]).

Equally worrying is the data pointing that about 16% of the world's population, about 1.3 billion people, currently experience significant disability (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024). In the EU in particular, approximately 100 million people have some disability, with devastating consequences. The European Commission (2024) indicates that only half of people with disabilities have a job (a scenario that differs from people without disabilities, given that



3 out of 4 people are employed); 28.4% of people with disabilities are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (vs. 17.8%); only 29.4% (vs. 43.8%) complete a higher education degree; and 52% feel discriminated in this scope.

In Portugal, remains a significant difference between the employment rates of people with disabilities (65%) – with additional barriers in women – and people without disabilities (79.7%), although this has decreased over the years. Similarly, unemployment among people with disabilities (14.7%) continues to be higher than that among people without disabilities (9.1%). Reference entities in the country have identified that there is also no significant increase in the hiring of this population (7% of placements of people registered as unemployed in 2024); and a low prevalence of workers with disabilities in the private sector (0.72% in companies with more than 10 employees) and in the public sector (3.2%), but with reports of gradual increases. Related to the risk of poverty or social exclusion the data shows consistently higher in the households of people with disabilities, worsening with the severity of the disability. There has been a decrease (in 2023) in complaints of discrimination on the disability or aggravated health risk, but this may indicate not an improvement instead a loss of confidence in the existing mechanisms (Observatory of Disability and Human Rights, 2024).

In this sense, the transition to the job market is a crucial stage in the construction of this group's life project, and training institutions must play an active role in supporting future professionals in this developmental task and in the career/rehabilitation counselling. In fact, there is a strategy in Portugal (National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025), in accordance with Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, that advocates everyone should find answers to access qualification levels that facilitate social inclusion. It is not too much to emphasize that, with appropriate methodologies, inclusion also in higher education is possible, which has a positive impact on improving employability (Machado et al., 2020). So, the strategy seeks to ensure the rights of SSEN with regard to equal opportunities (including gender equality) and access to the labor market, promoting the individuality, self-determination, dignity and inclusion.

These issues have been, already, addressed over time in other important documents, like the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) – Article 27, which refers «the right of people with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others [...] in a labor market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities»; and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), already mentioned, which particularly includes the goal 8 – decent work and economic growth. It should be noted that there are several studies (e.g., Rahim et al., 2024) proving the relationship between decent work and well-being, mediated by work engagement of people with disabilities.

### ***Social Responsibility and Inclusion in the Job Market***

Summarily, there is still a strong prevalence of workplace ableism/discrimination among young people and young adults with disabilities, which demands for research and effective solutions, to reduce barriers and improve facilitators, in attitudes, knowledge, awareness and accessibility, that is comprehensive and integrated policies (Atobatele & Okonkwo, 2024; Breaz, 2020; Lindsay et al., 2023; Morris et al., 2024; Nevala et al., 2019; Observatory of Disability and Human Rights, 2024; Ramos, 2022; UNESCO, 2022).



In fact, as part of a company's sustainability or social responsibility strategy, a comprehensive approach must be adopted with regard to people with disabilities (Fundación ONCE & ILO Global Business and Disability Network, 2019). The management of diversity and inclusion in the workplace is also a factor for organizations staying competitive (Singh, 2023).

This implies that both society and the workplace must be more responsible for inclusion, ensuring equal conditions and participation in the labor market, while fighting against discrimination. Thus, we will work towards promoting quality jobs and incomes that allow for a dignified and independent life. We mustn't forget that having a job provides personal value and a sense of usefulness, particularly for people with disabilities. Therefore, in addition to employers should be made aware of the skills and limitations of people with disabilities, the development of tailored training and adapting roles to the type of disability is essential, as well as promoting health in the workplace, including preventive measures and ergonomics. The use of technologies, including telecommuting, can also be a beneficial factor for inclusion (Ramos, 2022).

So, companies, with empathy, companionship, mutual help and adaptation, need to be well informed and understand that they should hire people on the basis of their abilities, the real need for their services (not out of charity or assistance) and the contribution to the organization. Add that stakeholders (including the State) have only an effective role if there is collaboration and partnership between everyone, in order to a more inclusive future (Gomes et al., 2022).

We analysed the implementation of a funded project for SSEN, in an HEI with other practices in this scope (e.g., an office for SSEN and another to support employability).

## **Methodology**

An exploratory qualitative study was carried out with 5 final-year SSEN/recent graduates from a HEI in central Portugal, mostly female (only one male), with specific needs such as deafness (2 cases), visual impairment (1), and mental health problems (2).

Of the 5 cases, 2 were still studying for a bachelor's degree and 3 were already graduates (1 unemployed, 1 studying in a master's degree and 1 already covered by a supported employment measure, but with imminent end) - the predominant area of training was in social sciences, except for 1 engineering student, the only one attending another School, even belonging to the same institution.

The work carried out began with an assessment of the students' personal and social functioning profile, based on an interview and the use of standardized instruments (skills and professional vocation). Observation and follow-up records/reports were also used (based on regular support sessions), as well as feedback from students (also include a satisfaction questionnaire) and professors. Throughout the process, ethical requirements were guaranteed, including informed consent.



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## Results and Discussion

From the project implementation, between January and July 2023, the students' demand for the support provided stands out, in conjunction with existing services at the institution (office for SSEN and another to support employability) and referral by professors.

The work carried out fundamentally included individualized psycho-pedagogical support sessions (psychology and social education), focused on interests and life projects and on strengthening socio-personal skills, empowering active job search and access to the job market, with the students' accompanying, and contacts with community organizations were also covered.

The intervention developed resulted in: i) awareness of organizations/companies for the employment of people with disabilities, including information on legislation and services to support hiring (e.g., digital flyer; when necessary, was sent a report for the employer, with the consent of the person being supported); ii) career/rehabilitation counselling, developing self-knowledge and active job search skills (e.g., help with curriculum and cover letters; searching for employment opportunities; contacts with potential employers/networking; preparing for job interviews), monitoring all the process; iii) creation of a theoretical-practical employability support manual (physical and online available in the institutional repository - for audio reading -, as well as a braille version); iv) paid socio-professional experience; v) direct contact with company managers (for a visit and possible internship); and vi) contact with a City Hall to pursue a supported employment measure.

It is worth noting the success, despite the short duration of the project, in responding to all requests made by students, in conjunction with the existing services at the institution (SSEN office and another to support employability) and the referrals made by professors. Some cases followed had not yet finished their studies, so it was also well-succeed in a preventive scope.

The results are also positive in terms of students' perceptions. The instrument used evaluates parameters such as the ease of scheduling sessions, the availability of the professionals, the importance of the support in terms of the objectives and the relevance of its continuity, on a scale of 0 to 4 (where 0 corresponds to not at all satisfied and 4 to very satisfied), with the exception of the last topic, on a scale of 0 to 5 (where 0 corresponds to not at all important and 5 to indispensable).

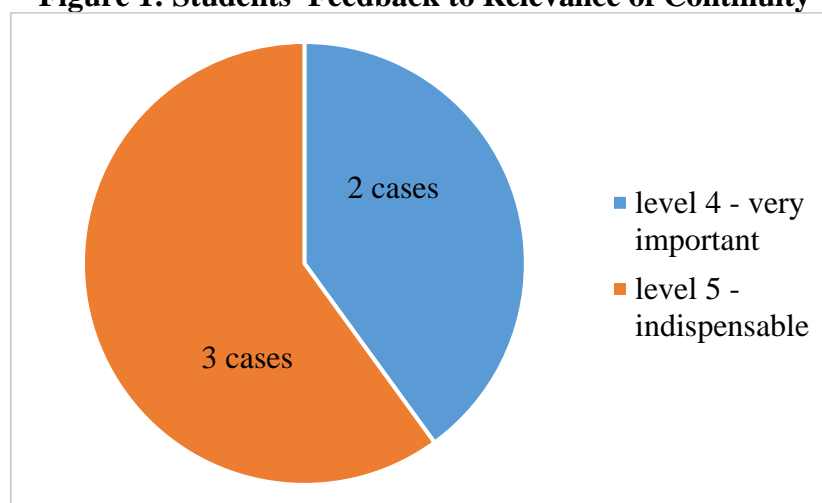
According to case follow-up and satisfaction questionnaires (Table), the majority students significantly valued the support of the project: they were very satisfied (n=4)/ satisfied (n=1) according to the objectives (also with socio-professional experience, when it applies); and considered it indispensable (n=3)/ reported that was very important (n=2) that it continues, which was not possible due the end of the project financial support. In an open space to comments/suggestions, these issues were also emphasized, as were the difficulties overcome, and it was even mentioned that other students should be able to benefit from this opportunity. They also suggested the presence of professionals from the different training areas concerned to share testimonies and network.

**Table 1: Students' Satisfaction with the Support**

Student	Ease of scheduling (0-4)	Availability of professionals (0-4)	Importance of the support (0-4)
A	4	4	4
B	4	4	4
C	4	4	4
D	4	4	3
E	3	3	4

Source: Table by the Authors

**Figure 1: Students' Feedback to Relevance of Continuity**



Source: Figure by the Authors

Therefore, the protocol articulation of this service in a HEI with community partners was fundamental, facilitating the promotion of socio-professional experiences that result in working conditions adapted to the needs of these graduates, ensuring their personal and professional fulfillment, fair earnings, and a dignified life, as outlined in the previously stated principles.

In consensus with the literature, a systematic review on the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions for people with intellectual disabilities, focused on employment, transition to the labor market and functioning, facilitators indicated were secondary education with work experience and personal support services, supported employment (while sheltered work did not have this effect), job coaching, an adapted work environment, as well as family and business support. The barriers highlighted were discrimination in work experience, the use of classroom teaching and the lack of work experience during schooling (Nevala et al., 2019).

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About career counselling, another analysis highlighted its crucial role in overcoming the barriers faced by people with disabilities in the labor market, in the sense that personalised interventions improve skills, self-sufficiency and independence. Vocational guidance in these cases goes far beyond traditional career counselling and must be combined with the policies that guarantee the creation of accessible and inclusive environments (also harnessing the



potential of technology). This is a necessary transformation that allows people with disabilities to be celebrated for their unique contribution (Atobatele & Okonkwo, 2024).

In a study conducted with 30 people with disabilities (of various types), who participated in a 3-week professional counselling program, six months later, they were questioned about job satisfaction, relationships with colleagues and superiors, and about the quality of services provided (by a social worker). The results indicated that most of participants had a positive evaluation of the program and believe that, without it, they would remain unemployed (Breaz, 2020).

In this context, the relevance of creating proximity services to support the transition to the labor market is added, which do not replace public initiatives, but allow for a personalized, complementary, and tailored intervention to the needs of these students/young people/adults.

## Conclusion

Employability issues are sensitive to the general community. In people with disabilities, not having a job becomes an added factor of social marginalization and economic exclusion, that urgently needs to be improved on the path to equity. It is essential to prepare these young people for the transition to the job market, which involves, in addition to academic training, the development of personal and social skills and awareness-raising and liaison with employers and society in general. Working conditions must be dignified and that depends on all of us.

The project under analysis demonstrated that, with relevant and integrated/collaborative measures, hopeful results for the future are possible. The aim of accompanying the SSEN in their transition to working life was achieved, with training strategies that facilitated structural and solid self-transformation. It should be emphasized that HEI, working collaboratively and in a network with employers, have an important role for a more informed, equitable and inclusive society.

These projects are essential, especially as a test for structural and lasting measures, otherwise they will create needs and expectations that will be quickly frustrated. More resources (human, technical and financial) must be guaranteed, and the continuity and scope of the initiatives must be ensured.

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