"DISmode – Digital training for NGO's youth workers to become disability support moderators for youth with disabilities"

Work package 3 Learning activities (for disability support moderators)

CONSOLIDATED PILOTING REPORT

February, 2025

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Preamble

In the period September 2024 – February 2025, the partners INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DE BRAGANÇA, Bragança, Portugal, World Innovative Sustainable Solutions, Istanbul, Turkiye, Bulgarian Inclusion Support Team, Sofia, Bulgaria and ASOCIACIÓN MADRILEÑA DE PROFESIONALES DE LA ATENCIÓN TEMPRANA, Madrid, Spain organized thorough pilot implementation phase based on the predefined pilot plan as part of work package 3 Learning activities (for disability support moderators).

The initial framework as stated in the project application form and work programme planned to recruit 40 candidates to be trained as "disability support moderators". Due to the extended and comprehensive awareness campaign organized by the four partners, we have received 179 applications of candidates and therefore the consortium decided to involve all of them.

In this document we will present the framework for the pilot implementation realisation as well as the main results and impact for the participants, participating organisations as well as local, regional and national level based on summary of the results from the feedback gathering surveys conducted in the four countries – Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and Turkiye.

We also pointed out how we ensured sustainability, exploitation and further dissemination of the project results.

Activities

There were three major activities:

- Organisation of series of training activities to potential youth NGO's disability support moderators - in Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and Turkiye
- Preparation of case studies and collection of testimonials from participants in the pilot phase from Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and Turkey
- Development of Consolidated report with conclusions and feedback gathering consolidation based on national reports and findings.

Indicators

We have achieved the following qualitative and quantitative indicators:

Quantitative:

- KPI1: 40 Youth with disabilities (aged 18-27), who would like to apply and enter the different forms or transition in education in Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and Turkiye and who are eager to be supported by disability support moderators (as a result from interventions of moderators)
- KPI2: 40 Youth NGO staff - who would to be trained as disability support moderators (actual number was extended to 179).
- KPI3: 10 representatives of the Management board of the participating NGOs who will be aware of the project, and who will approve the new functional profile and monitor the process
- KPI4: 40 Parents of youth with disabilities, who will have an advocacy and supportive role in the process of transition from school to the HEI.

Qualitative:

- KPI1: Implementation of the functional profile of the youth NGO's disability support moderator in Portugal, Bulgaria, Spain and Turkiye
- KPI2: Improvement of the inclusion of youth with disabilities in formal and non-formal education opportunities in Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and Turkiye
- KPI3: Improvement of provision of support and facilitation competences of the youth NGO staff
- KPI4: Improvement of communication and sign language knowledge of the youth NGO staff

- KPI5: Improvement of the overall disability awareness of the youth NGO staff
- KPI6: Improvement of the reasonable adjustments of the training process in Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and Turkiye
- KPI7: Improvement of the digital competences of the youth NGO staff about supportive assistive technologies, which can support the needs of the youth with disabilities.

Tools

During the pilot implementation phase, the partners used the following tools:

- Self-assessment case-based mechanism (based on the principles of validation of formal and non-formal competences) for minimum requirements of the disability support moderator, which s/he should have as knowledge, skills and competences to provide guidance and support to youth with disabilities
- Feedback gathering tool, which will allow us to collect and analyse the level of satisfaction of youth with disabilities towards provided services by the disability support moderator.
- Case studies and testimonials, collected during the learning activities for the potential disability support moderators.
- Mid-term and final evaluation of the process via observations by partners and the internal quality manager from BIST.
- Pilot implementation report, presenting the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

Candidates profile

- Existing professionals in non-governmental organizations, social work units, resource tutors working in terms of support of youth with disabilities.
- Students (3rd or 4th year) bachelor's or master's degree in the field of Pedagogics, Social work, Administration and management, Psychology who would like to become Disability support moderators.
- Each of them has participate in blended learning sessions (minimum 6) consisting of initial session, training session, mid-term session, training finalization session, mid-term session on review on practical work with youth with disabilities, final session – feedback gathering and evaluation.

We have trained successfully the following number of candidates as disability support moderators:

- Portugal - 90 people
- Turkiye - 32 people
- Spain - 37 people
- Bulgaria - 20 people

Total: 179 users

Modes of training implementation - presentation of online content, discussions, role-play games to simulate awareness about limitations caused by disability, individual questions and answers.

Modes of practical implementation - learning by doing, learning by observing peers' interaction, individual study visits to universities and other educational institutions etc.

Interventions with youth with disabilities

- Youth with disabilities were the post-impact group, who took advantages from the actual consultancy and support provided by youth workers.
- 1 to 1 session between disability support moderators and youth with disabilities were organized in the same period of the piloting with the supervision by representatives of the partners.
- Minimum 2 sessions per couple were organized, where the trained disability support moderators were able to apply what they have learned during the piloting phase.

Main results

The main aim of the project was to prepare and train disability support moderators. Once we described the modalities and functions of these people with the dedicated profile (R1), we continued to develop 2 major training materials, based on which the pilot trainings have been organised in WP3. The training handbook consists of methods, strategies, tips and practices, which can ensure the proper execution of the work of the disability support moderators. The guidance material is based on the

Universal design for learning guidelines including the recent strategy of the consortium for inclusion and diversity policies. Dedicated communication module provides more information about the different groups of disabilities and what potential barriers these people may encounter while making a transition between the school graduation and entering higher education institutions. Tips about proper disability etiquette are provided as dedicated guidance on application and usage of digital assistive technologies. Basic videos consisting of key words in local Sign language are also provided.

Thanks to conducted training scheme in WP3, we have trained 179 (instead of 40 initially planned) people, who were equipped with proper training on inclusive education delivery, disability awareness, disability etiquette, communication guidelines including basic communication via assistive technologies and sign language. Furthermore, these people were trained thanks to the above training results, how to moderate the process on transition from different formal and non-formal pathways of education possibilities for the youth with disability and how to negotiate possible and needed adaptations of the learning and assessment/examination process, which will include handbook with guidelines. A Moodle based e-learning portal is produced as part of the project website. It facilitates the blended training process, and it provides a secure environment for access to the project deliverables. (https://elearning.dismode.eu). This platform supported the realisation of digital training and the facilitation of interaction with trainers from partners' institutions in case of need.

Thanks to the conducted pilot implementation phase in Portugal, Bulgaria, Spain and Turkiye, the project deliverables developed in WP2 have been tested and their quality was assessed based on dedicated feedback gathering survey. All participants perceive their participation in this training as an advantage or potential advantage for them and their future. They also believe that their participation in the training will contribute to their well-being and life success as well as to the extension of their career achievements. They determined that DISMODE training has met their preliminary expectations, even exceeded them. The timeframe for conducting the training is determined to be appropriate. The trainees express extreme satisfaction with the opportunity to be trained, as well as with the support from their trainers from the 4 partners institutions.

Youth with disabilities, who have starting to work with the trained disability support moderators were interviewed and we have collected positive feedback that they are feeling more self-confident and supported comparing to the time before their

intervention with the trained moderators. Half of them are already ready to apply for higher education in the forthcoming autumn. They express willingness to recommend the training to other peers. We expect this to lead to improved mental health, better relationships and overall well-being.

Supporting documents available: Consolidated pilot findings report, signed list of participants during physical trainings, photos, testimonials, evaluation survey for feedback gathering by the trained moderators.

With the extension of the number of the disability support moderators from 40 to 179 already shows our intention as a consortium to scale up this process. We have implemented rigorous quality control measures to ensure that all trainers adhere to the same standards and deliver consistent training. Even after the project piloting process we have 30 new candidates who have registered themselves in the e-learning platform, which means that the training process already continues beyond the project lifecycle. We have planned also to use the existing trained disability support moderators to become mentors of newcomers, which will multiply the possibilities our training and our results to be scaled up on a multiple number of people. We will continue to conduct targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness about the training program among potential participants as well as to share success stories and testimonials from previous trainees to inspire and motivate new participants.

Participating in a blended training program designed for disability support moderators offered several significant satisfaction benefits. These benefits in the evaluation feedback have been categorized by the piloters into personal, professional, and organizational advantages. Participants acquire specialized knowledge and skills in disability support, including understanding different types of disabilities, effective communication techniques, and the use of assistive technologies. They learned how to create inclusive environments and provide tailored support to youth with disabilities. The DISMODE training enhances career prospects by adding a valuable credential to their resume. It opens up opportunities for advancement within their current role or organization. All of them find satisfaction in being able to make a tangible difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities. The ability to contribute positively to societal inclusion and equality bring to them a sense of purpose and fulfilment. The DISMODE training programme served as a stepping stone for career advancement within the NGOs and educational institutions. It demonstrates commitment to professional development

and specialization in disability support. They pointed out that being certified as a disability support moderator bring recognition and respect from colleagues, supervisors, and client (youth with disabilities). It positions them as experts in their field, enhancing their professional standing.

Impact

Thank to this work package and its results, the partnership achieved the following benefits for the above target groups:

- Implementation of the functional profile of the youth NGO's disability support moderator in partners countries
- Improvement of the inclusion of youth with disabilities in formal and non-formal education opportunities in partners countries
- Improvement of provision of support and facilitation competences of the youth NGO staff
- Improvement of communication and sign language knowledge of the youth NGO staff
- Improvement of the overall disability awareness of the youth NGO staff
- Improvement of the reasonable adjustments of the training process in partners countries
- Improvement of the digital competences of the youth NGO staff about supportive assistive technologies, which can support the needs of the youth with disabilities.

Impact on participants/target groups:

- Overall, the impact on youth workers trained as Disability Support Moderators is transformative. They become more effective professionals, experience personal growth, and contribute significantly to the wellbeing of youth with disabilities, their organizations, and the broader community.
- The DISMODE training increases empathy towards individuals with disabilities, helping youth workers understand their unique challenges and perspectives. This enhanced empathy often leads to personal growth, making youth workers more compassionate and patient in their interactions.

- As youth workers gain new skills and knowledge, they feel more confident in their ability to provide effective support. They became better equipped to handle challenging situations involving youth with disabilities in terms of their inclusion at higher education, reducing stress and anxiety from the unknown circumstances

- Upon realisation of the piloting phase, knowing they are making a positive impact on the lives of youth with disabilities significantly increased their job satisfaction, because the role of a disability support moderator provides a strong sense of purpose and fulfillment.

- Trained youth workers can provide more personalized and tailored support, meeting the specific needs of each individual. They can implement inclusive practices that foster a supportive and welcoming environment for all youth.

- In addition, trained youth workers contributed to broader societal changes by promoting inclusion and equality for individuals with disabilities. They serve as role models, inspiring others (those who applied for training beyond the project realisation) to adopt inclusive practices and to serve as their mentors.

Impact on participating organisations:

- The partners organizations demonstrated a commitment to inclusivity and excellence. The provision of the guidance and support services by the 4 partners in the consortium and by the organisations, with whom they signed exploitation agreements, enriched their portfolio of qualitative services, which also will have long-term effect on their future as organisations.

- Trained youth workers achieved better outcomes for youth with disabilities, leading to higher client satisfaction. Improved outcomes led to higher retention rates among clients and beneficiaries.

- The DISMODE results, and training ensures that above organizations comply with legal requirements and best practices in disability support. It helps mitigate risks associated with non-compliance and potential legal issues.

On **local level**, the activities in this work package contributed to the long-term mission and vision of the participating organisations to expand and complement the learning and well-being experience with the youth with disabilities and their families. Moreover, on national level in PT, ES, BG and TR we contributed to improvement of the social conditions and to sensitize the policy makers' opinion on the problems of the youth

with special educational needs and towards the inclusive learning practices in partners countries. Indeed, the project partners will continue the training process (by own resources) of disability support moderators beyond project lifetime. The project deliverables will continue to serve as learning and methodological guidance materials beyond the project lifetime.

On **regional and national levels**, we as partnership increased the number of trained disability support moderators also from other NGOs, who will continue to conduct inclusive learning practices. Thanks to the piloting phase we have increased opportunities for disability support moderators' personal development towards disability awareness and disability etiquette. We have increased their motivation and satisfaction in their daily activities as well as we have increased their sense of initiative and innovation. Trained disability support moderators make youth with disabilities and with special educational needs more active in the participation in the continuous education, but also overall in society and we potentially reduced any possible educational dropout due to non-inclusiveness.

Sustainability

The four project partners will continue to deliver non-formal training to potential disability support moderators. For that purpose, each partner established an action plan with the training offers for the next three years after project end. In addition, each partner signed cooperation agreements for exploitation and mainstreaming of project results. In Portugal, these are APADI, ASCUDT, CEE, CERCIMAC.

In Spain - "Compass A la par" Fundación A la par, Madrid, "IES Francisco García Pavón " Tomelloso. Ciudad Real and CCEE Virgen de Lourdes. Majadahonda,Madrid.

In Bulgaria - National association of employers of people with disabilities and Bulgarian Teachers' Union (the biggest sindicate with 96 000 members).

In Turkiye -with the Regional educational directorate in Esenyrt, Istanbul and Zeytinburnu Municipality. This will ensure that the potential number of the trained moderators will increase in the forthcoming years, and this will allow more youth with disabilities to be integrated in accessible manner at educational institutions.

As a consortium, we have sent informative letters and presentation of the project deliverables and results from the piloting to organisations such as: Superior Technical Professional Course of Accompaniment of Children and Youngsters; Scientific Review

Board of the International Dyslexia Association; Center for Research in Basic Education (CIEB), EURLYAID, GAT, SIPOSIO, POLIBEA, Secretary of State for Social Services and Secretary General of the Royal Board of Trustees on Disability. In this regard, we have made contacts aimed at expanding and strengthening our network by further integrating project stakeholders and key players in European networks in the field and expanding the existing learning community, including the European School Heads Association, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, ECREA – European Communication Research and Education Association, Lifelong learning platform, European Association for International Education, European Schoolnet, Association for Teacher Education in Europe, European Distance and E-Learning Network, The Open Education Consortium, Open Education Europa. We have also planned publications in the School Education Gateway and Lifelong Learning platform.

Also, we will continue to promote the project results into future dissemination events and congresses as well as via project website, partners' websites and social media. We plan also to organise at least one seminar after one year of the completed piloting to measure the long-term impact of our initiative and to continue to provide support to newly trained disability support moderators.

Overall, the project partners created an inclusive, intellectually stimulating, emotionally and physically safe learning environment by supporting the youth with disabilities dignified, responsible and safe behaviour, implementing the appropriate development needs of each learner approach. The trained disability support moderators cooperate with colleagues in the educational institution and parents of the learner identifying and communicating information regarding the learner's growth, performance and the necessary support for the improvement of learning and career enlargement.

The participating 4 organisations benefited from having highly skilled and knowledgeable disability support moderators who can provide high-quality services. This led to better client satisfaction and retention. The training ensures that the organization adheres to best practices and legal requirements in disability support. It helps to avoid potential legal issues and maintains compliance with regulations. Completing the training program gave participants a sense of accomplishment and pride in their professional growth. These satisfaction benefits collectively contribute to a more motivated, competent, and fulfilled workforce, ultimately leading to better outcomes for individuals with disabilities and the organizations that support them.

Conclusions

We believe that thanks to this project we have been able to develop high quality practices as following:

1.   Client-centred approach: In our project we have been able to produce training and training materials based on Universal design for learning. This helped to our trainers and the trained disability support moderators to create personalized learning plans tailored to each learner's with disabilities needs, interests, and prior knowledge. In such way we have offered flexible learning pathways via the provision of the flexible training scheme and digital learning opportunity via e-learning platform.

2.   Competency-based assessment: Our case based-assessment was dedicated to measurable competencies that candidates must achieve based on the R1 functional profile.

3.   Experiential learning: In several practical activities we have stimulated the experiential learning incorporating hands-on activities and practical experiences that allow candidates for disability support moderators to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. We have organised some field trips and site visits to provide real-world exposure and contextualize learning.

4.   Collaborative learning: We have encouraged group collaborative tasks that fostered teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills.

5.   Technology integration: We have utilized our online platform to deliver content, track progress, and facilitate communication between candidates and their trainers. The digital nature of the project results such as the handbook, communication module and Sign language videos supported the interaction during the learning process.

6.   Reflective Practice: As mentioned above we have encouraged the candidates to maintain reflection portfolio where they documented their learning experiences, challenges, and insights. In such way teaching metacognitive strategies to help our piloters to think critically about their learning process and develop self-regulation skills was a real advantage having in mind the specifics of their clients - youth with disabilities.

7.   Overall, our project becomes a reasonable example of inclusive practices ensuring that our learning materials and activities are culturally responsive and inclusive, catering

to diverse backgrounds and abilities. For some youth with disabilities, we have provided assistive technologies to help them to use the project results such as text-to-speech and screen readers.

Case studies

PORTUGAL

Case study 1

Initials: AP / Age: 27

Questions:

1. What motivated you to join the DISMODE training?
2. What have you learnt?
3. Can you share some specific examples of how you can use what you have learned in your daily practice now as disability support moderator?
4. Were there any challenges faced during the program, and if so, how were they addressed?
5. Did the program have any lasting effects on your career choices or aspirations?
6. What is your key message?

The case study questions aim to understand the motivations for joining the DISMODE training. The questions are designed to discover what participants learned during the training. Questions explore how participants can apply their new knowledge in their daily practice as disability support moderators. The study also focuses on challenges faced during the program and their resolution. Further questions investigate the program's lasting impact on career choices and aspirations. Finally, the survey solicits a key message from the participant.

This case study focuses on the DISMODE training program and explores participants' experiences and insights.

- Participants discuss their motivations for joining and what they learned throughout the program.
- There's an emphasis on how the training can be applied in daily practices as disability support moderators.
- The challenges faced during the program and their resolutions are also highlighted.

The participants had a role-playing session to discuss situations experienced in a real-life context. They were allowed to create a concept map (mind map) to represent their ideas in a synoptic way, collaboratively discussed in the group. In the following figure, we present the result of the mind map from one of the groups.
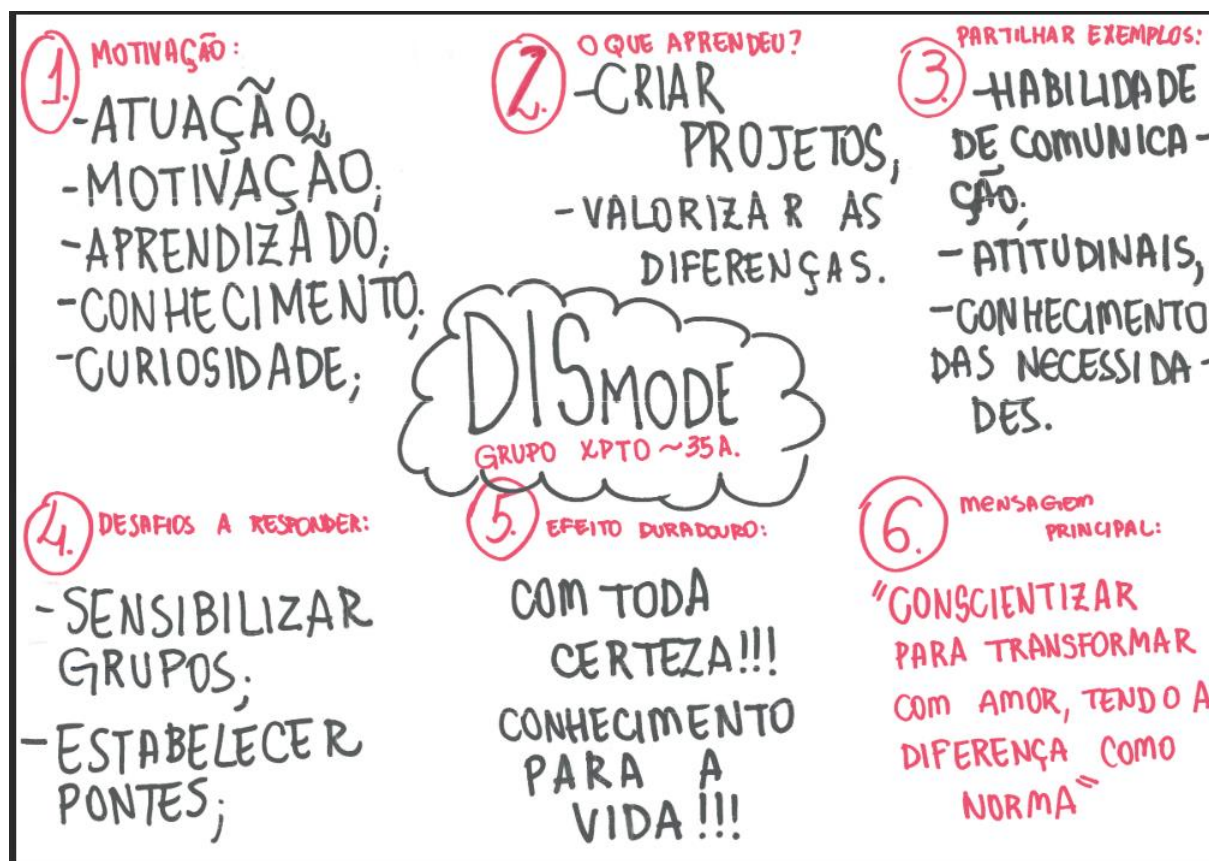

Figure 1 Work group mind map

As you can see, the mind map is organized around the word 'DISMODE,' which represents the project's name. It is divided into six main sections, each numbered from 1 to 6, representing different aspects of what we wanted to understand with the initial questions. The first question (What motivated you to join the DISMODE training?) concerns motivation. In the mind map, the participants associated a number of words with it, mentioning 'Action', 'Motivation', 'Learning', 'Knowledge' and 'Curiosity'. This diversity of words suggests that the motivation to take part in the project was multifaceted. As emphasised later in the presentation, the word 'Action' indicates a desire for action or active participation. The words 'Learning' and 'Knowledge' show a desire to acquire new skills and information. The word 'Curiosity' indicates a desire to explore and understand the topic better. In other words, this group, considering an overview of their feelings, was motivated by a desire to act, learn, know and by curiosity about the project's theme.

In answering the second question (What have you learnt?), the participants highlighted the expressions 'Creating projects' and 'Valuing differences' as the main lessons learnt. This may indicate that the project training helped them focus on developing skills to create inclusive projects and promote the valorization of diversity.

In the third question (Can you share some specific examples of how you can use what you have learned in your daily practice now as disability support moderator?), the participants mentioned some examples: 'Communication skills,' 'Attitudinal skills', and 'Knowledge of needs'. These examples suggest that the training, to some extent, helped improve communication skills, developed inclusive attitudes and provided knowledge about the needs of people with disabilities. In addition, they highlighted some practical examples: (i) using clear and accessible language, adapting communication to individual needs (communication); promoting an inclusive environment, combating prejudices and stereotypes (attitudes); and identifying and responding to the specific needs of each person, adapting activities and resources (knowledge of needs).

In answering question number four (Were there any challenges faced during the programme, and if so, how were they addressed?), the participants noted the following expressions, as can be seen in the mind map: 'Sensitizing groups' and 'Building bridges.' We think we can gauge that the training addressed the difficulty of sensitizing different groups and creating connections between people with and without disabilities. The map doesn't specify how these challenges were addressed, but their mention suggests that they were discussed and considered throughout the training in the Dismode project.

On question number five (Did the programme have any lasting effects on your career choices or aspirations?) the participants summarised their opinion in two expressions that they considered representative of the training: 'Absolutely!!!' and 'Knowledge for life!!!'. They indicate precisely the impact and duration, suggesting that the knowledge acquired and the skills developed will apply in various situations and that the training has positively influenced their professional aspirations.

Finally, they were asked to leave a message (What is your key message?). This group's key message is expressed as follows: 'Raising awareness in order to transform with love, with difference as the norm'. We think this message summarises the main objective of the training: to promote awareness and social transformation, valuing diversity and inclusion. The DISmode project seems to have been a transformative experience that motivated participants to act, learn and promote inclusion. The training provided practical tools and

knowledge, addressed important challenges and had a lasting impact on the participants' aspirations.

The case study prompts participants to share specific examples of how they applied what they learned in their daily practice as disability support moderators. However, the actual responses or detailed examples from participants are not included in the text provided. The emphasis on applying learned concepts suggests that participants have opportunities to integrate new strategies and knowledge into their work, potentially enhancing their effectiveness in supporting individuals with disabilities. For concrete examples, we would need more context or participant feedback.

Case study 2

Initials: PF / Age: 25

In another group, as can be seen in Figure 2, the answers to the questions posed were also presented in a mind map built around six axes: motives; learning, moderation, training, challenges, sharing.

The motivations mentioned orally complement what is written in the image. Thus, the desire to broaden the range of knowledge, particularly about support services, and to learn more about the different Special Educational Needs (SEN), mobility problems and the problems that arise when a disabled person looks for work/employment, which could be a path to their inclusion in society and social justice, were highlighted. In addition, he wants to improve his professional performance and as a moderator he wants to be an agent of change and someone who fights for the rights of people with SEN. As such, this moderator is a facilitator of the school and social life of people with SEN, trying to help eliminate different barriers, not just physical ones, but also attitudinal ones.
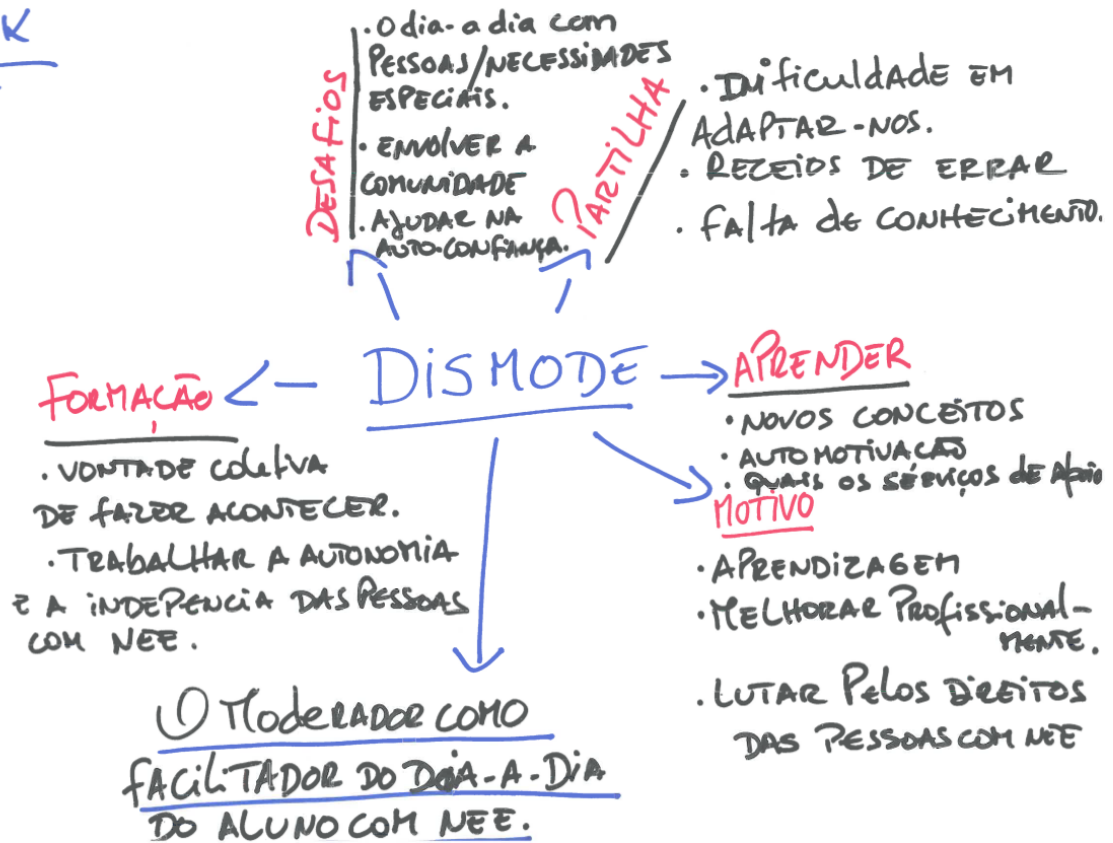
Figure 2 Mind map

In terms of training, they stress its importance because they have learned, for example, how to promote the autonomy of people with SEN, and they also highlight the collective will to learn and do more and better, to make things happen. As challenges, they highlighted the day-to-day work with people with SEN, the difficulties of involving the community and promoting self-confidence. They also shared the difficulty of adapting, the fear of making mistakes and the lack of knowledge. However, they admit that the training has helped them to expand and consolidate their knowledge.

Case study 3

Initials: ABRFS / Age: 25

Below is a comprehensive overview of my experience with the DISMODE training:

When I joined the DISMODE project, my main motivation was the conviction that inclusion should not be an abstract guideline but an integral part of any educational and professional practice. The program presented, with terms such as 'neurodivergence', 'person with a disability' and 'inclusion', reinforced in me the idea that, beyond laws and regulations, there needs to be a change in mentality and attitude that puts the person at the centre of the process. The following diagram represents everything that I considered important in the training course (figure 3).
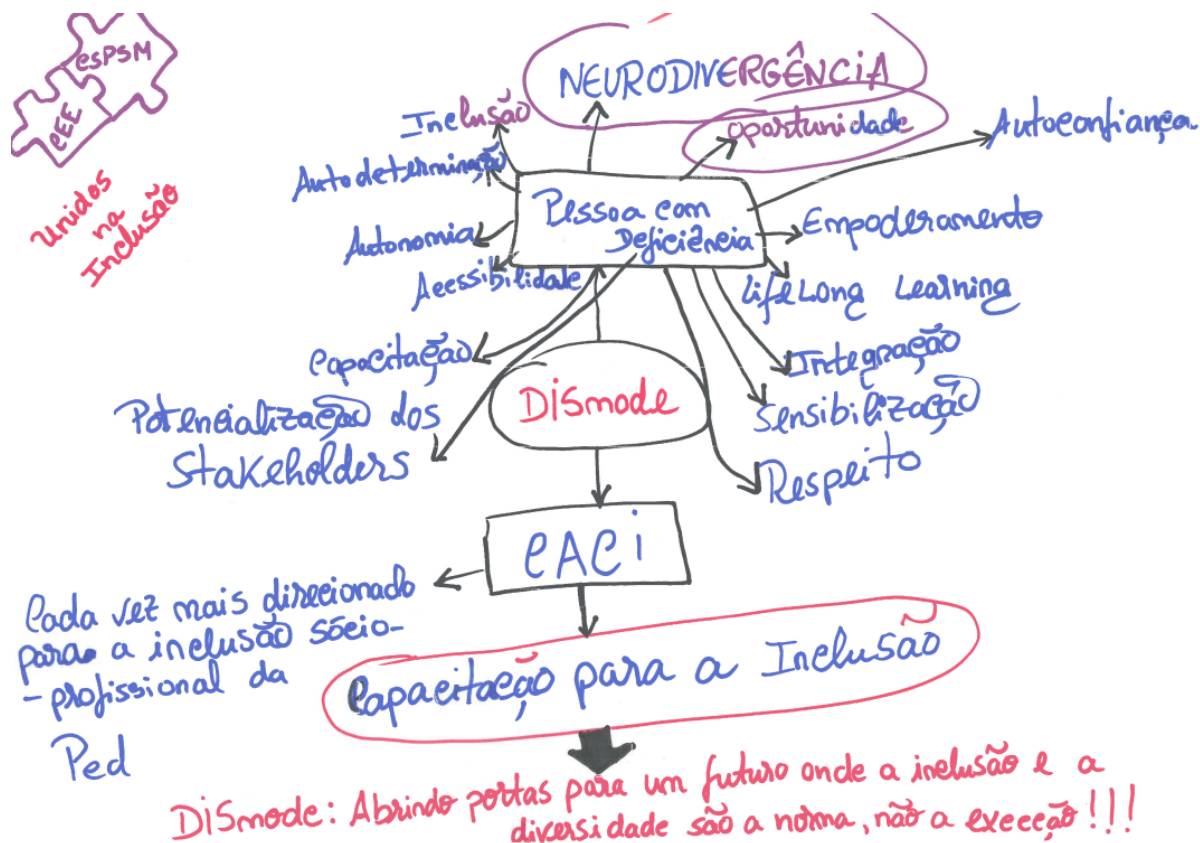
Figure 3 What was the most important impact?

The opportunity to interact with other professionals and stakeholders and to deepen my knowledge of the subject was a great incentive. I have always believed in the importance of sharing experiences to build a future where everyone has a voice and a say.

During the training, I learned not only technical concepts about disability and reasonable accommodation but also practical approaches to conflict mediation and lifelong learning strategies. Suggesting a broader view of neurodivergence, which includes people with different modes of cognitive processing, showed me the importance of recognising competencies beyond so-called 'normal' standards.

This learning has helped me to review my own attitudes and prejudices, encouraging me to act as a facilitator of opportunities for everyone. In addition, DISMODE provided a solid understanding of how the integration, respect and empowerment of stakeholders – be they educators, managers or co-workers – can create more inclusive, accessible and participatory environments. In everyday practice, I have come to apply this knowledge in concrete ways in different situations. For example, when planning meetings with hearing-impaired people, I tried to include real-time subtitles and ensure the presence of sign language interpreters. In training activities or workshops, I began to make materials available in multiple formats (text, audio and even easy-read and, therefore, more accessible versions, ensuring greater reach and inclusion. Another practical example was

the adoption of cooperative working methodologies, in which each group member could contribute according to their specific abilities, valuing the different ways of learning and expressing themselves. In this way, the lessons I learnt in the DISMODE course became an essential tool for moderating possible barriers that arise on a daily basis, promoting a culture of respect and integration.

As for the challenges faced throughout the programme, I can highlight the initial difficulty in deconstructing deep-rooted prejudices, as we often reproduce exclusionary patterns without realising it. Fortunately, DISMODE's reflexive approach offered spaces for dialogue and sharing experiences that helped me recognise these critical points and deal with them more consciously. There were also technical challenges, such as adapting digital platforms to make content more accessible, but with the support of trainers and colleagues we were able to develop creative solutions, for example by incorporating accessibility software and good practice guides on the use of technology.

The impact of this training on my career path was profound. I felt encouraged to look for jobs in which I could more consistently fulfil the role of support moderator for people with disabilities. Furthermore, I realised that the issue of inclusion is not restricted to a single type of disability or context: it is something that cut across the whole of society, present in schools, companies and even families. This understanding broadened my aspirations and led me to seek further training in conflict mediation and social inclusion project management.

Finally, if I had to summarise the main message I take away from this process, I would say that inclusion is a collective responsibility, but it starts with everyone. We need to be willing to question our own practices, to actively listen to others and to build bridges where there used to be walls. I believe that DISMODE's greatest legacy is precisely this vision of a future in which diversity is seen as the norm and not the exception. It is essential that we continue to open doors, create opportunities and believe in the potential of each person, because only in this way can we move towards a truly inclusive society.

TURKIYE

Case study 1

İsmail Özdemir: Special Education Teacher

- **Piloting Experience:**

  I applied Dismode to various teaching tasks, such as creating individualized learning plans (ILPs), visual schedules, and progress reports.

- **Accessibility Features:**The platform's templates and AI suggestions helped me create materials with accessible fonts, color contrasts, and layouts tailored to students' needs.

- **Collaboration Tools:**Dismode allowed me to share presentations with parents and support staff, enabling real-time feedback and updates.

- **Engaging Visuals:**I used the platform's data visualization tools to create simplified charts that made student progress more understandable for families.

DISmode project proved invaluable in supporting my work as a special education teacher, helping me meet accessibility standards, save time, and foster stronger collaboration with families and colleagues.

The DISmode project's resources significantly enhanced my ability to support students with disabilities. By adopting the functional profile, applying inclusive educational strategies, and utilizing effective communication practices, I observed notable improvements in student engagement and inclusivity within my classroom.

Case study 2

Nurefsan POLAT : Young moderator as a sport trainer

- As a young moderator working with individuals with disabilities, I employed the DISmode project's resources to improve my support strategies.

- The DISmode project's resources were pivotal in enhancing my role as a moderator supporting individuals with disabilities. By implementing the functional profile, inclusive strategies, and effective communication practices, I was able to provide more structured, accessible, and empathetic support, resulting in improved outcomes for the individuals I worked with.

SPAIN

AMPAT team organised a group feedback gathering session based on the questions below. You may see the summary of the piloters feedback.

1. What motivated you to join the DISMODE training?**–That the course touches on different and wide-ranging types of disabilities.**

-The practical examples are very didactic and can be carried out without expensive investment in equipment.

2. What have you learnt?

To know very good tools and resources to be able to work both in the classroom and in real life with this type of students.

-Can be applied in classrooms where there are no students with disabilities, but where they need other types of help, and by using these resources, motivation, self-esteem and integration into society for whatever reason can be worked on in a very positive way.

3. Can you share some specific examples of how you can use what you have learned in your daily practice now as disability support moderator

–

Applying the resources and tools proposed in the course to the different disabilities and learning difficulties in the classroom.

4. Were there any challenges faced during the program, and if so, how were they addressed??

– There was no problem

5. 5. Did the program have any lasting effects onyourcareer choices or aspirations?

– Yes, they feel they are more prepared to work with students with disabilities.

6.What is your key message?

–Training to work with people with disabilities is very important, as you learn more about their needs.

Recommendations for the future initiatives:

Maybe it will be valuabnle to include in future initiatives sport-related aspects, such as organising a school of values where sport is used as a model for integration into society as well as to add social issues (drugs, behavioural addictions, behavioural addictions, etc.) for pupils and parents.

BULGARIA

Case Study 1: A.I. – Age: 27

1. **Motivation:** "I was inspired by my own experiences growing up with a sibling with a disability. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others facing similar challenges."

2. **Learnings:** "The DISMODE training taught me about different types of disabilities, effective communication strategies, and how to create inclusive environments."

3. **Application:** "I now use these skills to tailor my support plans for each individual, ensuring they feel understood and included in all aspects of their lives."

4. **Challenges:** "One challenge was balancing the theoretical knowledge with practical application. We overcame this through hands-on workshops and peer support."

5. **Career Impact:** "Absolutely! The training solidified my commitment to this field and opened doors to new opportunities within disability support services."

6. **Key Message:** "Every person deserves respect and the chance to live a fulfilling life. Our role as a disability support moderator is to empower them to achieve that."

Case Study 2: B.P. – Age: 28

1. **Motivation:** "I had always been passionate about social justice and saw disability support as an area where I could make a tangible impact."

2. **Learnings:** "I gained insights into legal frameworks, advocacy strategies, and the importance of holistic care for individuals with disabilities."

3. **Application:** "I now advocate for policy changes at local government meetings and ensure my clients know their rights and how to assert them."

4. **Challenges:** "Time management was a challenge, but we received excellent organizational tips and resources to stay on track."

5. **Career Impact:** "Definitely! It confirmed my desire to specialize in disability law and policy, aiming to influence systemic change."

6. **Key Message:** "Knowledge is power. Equip yourself with it and use it to fight for those who need it most."

Case Study 3: C.D. – Age: 26

1. **Motivation:** "My previous job involved working with disabled children, and I wanted to deepen my understanding to provide better support."

2. **Learnings:** "The training covered child development, adaptive learning strategies, and how to create inclusive educational settings."

3. **Application:** "I implement these strategies in classrooms, ensuring every child feels valued and capable of reaching their potential."

4. **Challenges:** "Balancing work and study was tough, but the flexible online modules made it manageable."

5. **Career Impact:** "It reinforced my love for teaching and inspired me to pursue further qualifications in special education."

6. **Key Message:** "Inclusion starts with understanding and adapting our methods to meet each child's unique needs."

Case Study 4: D.E. – Age: 29

1. **Motivation:** "I wanted to combine my medical background with a more personalized approach to patient care."

2. **Learnings:** "I learned about chronic conditions, pain management, and the psychological impact of living with a disability."

3. **Application:** "I now incorporate these insights into my medical practice, offering holistic care that addresses both physical and emotional well-being."

4. **Challenges:** "Integrating new practices into established medical protocols was initially challenging, but teamwork and open communication helped overcome this."

5. **Career Impact:** "It broadened my perspective and led me to explore interdisciplinary approaches to healthcare."

6. **Key Message:** "Holistic care considers the whole person, not just their condition. This leads to better outcomes and happier patients."

Case Study 5: F.G. – Age: 25

1. **Motivation:** "I was drawn to the idea of making a positive impact on people's lives and felt this training would equip me with the right skills."

2. **Learnings:** "I gained practical skills in assisting with daily tasks, fostering independence, and building meaningful relationships with clients."

3. **Application:** "I apply these skills daily, helping clients with everything from personal care to navigating public spaces confidently."

4. **Challenges:** "Adapting to different personalities and needs was initially overwhelming, but ongoing mentorship provided valuable guidance."

5. **Career Impact:** "It confirmed my passion for direct support work and inspired me to seek leadership roles within the field."

6. **Key Message:** "Building trust and rapport is key to effective support. Every interaction matters."

Case Study 6: H.J. – Age: 27

1. **Motivation:** "I wanted to transition from corporate work to a more fulfilling career where I could directly help others."

2. **Learnings:** "The training covered disability awareness, cultural sensitivity, and the importance of individualized care."

3. **Application:** "I now focus on creating culturally sensitive support plans that respect each client's background and preferences."

4. **Challenges:** "Adjusting to a new industry and its terminology was challenging, but the supportive learning environment eased the transition."

5. **Career Impact:** "It completely changed my career trajectory, leading me to a more purpose-driven path."

6. **Key Message:** "Respect and understanding form the foundation of effective support. Always strive to see the world through your client's eyes."

Case Study 7: K.L. – Age: 30

1. **Motivation:** "I have a close friend with a disability and wanted to learn how to better support them and others in similar situations."

2. **Learnings:** "I gained knowledge about different types of disabilities, effective communication, and the importance of empathy."

3. **Application:** "I now use these skills to offer emotional support and practical assistance to my friend and others in my community."

4. **Challenges:** "Finding time for the training alongside full-time work was difficult, but the flexibility of the program made it possible."

5. **Career Impact:** "It inspired me to consider a career shift towards disability support services in the future."

6. **Key Message:** "Empathy and understanding go a long way in making someone feel seen and supported."

Case Study 8: M.N. – Age: 36

1. **Motivation:** "I wanted to contribute to my community and felt this training would give me the tools to do so effectively."

2. **Learnings:** "The training covered disability etiquette, accessible design principles, and how to create inclusive communities."

3. **Application:** "I now volunteer at local organizations, advocating for accessibility and inclusivity in public spaces and events."

4. **Challenges:** "Convincing businesses and institutions to adopt accessibility measures was challenging, but persistence and data-backed arguments helped."

5. **Career Impact:** "It deepened my commitment to community work and inspired me to pursue further advocacy roles."

6. **Key Message:** "Inclusivity benefits everyone. Let's work together to create a world where everyone feels welcome and valued."

Case Study 9: O.P. – Age: 33

1. **Motivation:** "I wanted to combine my background in social work with specialized knowledge in disability support."

2. **Learnings:** "I learned about crisis intervention, trauma-informed care, and how to navigate complex support systems."

3. **Application:** "I now use these skills to provide immediate and long-term support to clients experiencing crises or transitions."

4. **Challenges:** "Dealing with emotionally charged situations was tough, but regular debriefing sessions with peers provided much-needed support."

5. **Career Impact:** "It reaffirmed my dedication to social work and inspired me to specialize in disability support within the field."

6. **Key Message:** "Compassionate care involves addressing both immediate needs and long-term wellbeing. Every interaction counts."

Case Study 10: Q.R. – Age: 26

1. **Motivation:** "I wanted to gain practical skills to support my family member with a disability and potentially turn it into a career."

2. **Learnings:** "The training covered basic caregiving, safety protocols, and how to promote independence while ensuring safety."

3. **Application:** "I now assist my family member with daily tasks, ensuring their comfort and safety while encouraging autonomy."

4. **Challenges:** "Balancing caregiving with personal commitments was challenging, but the program's flexible schedule made it manageable."

5. **Career Impact:** "It sparked my interest in professional caregiving and inspired me to explore related career paths."

6. **Key Message:** "Caregiving is about balance—ensuring safety while empowering independence. Every moment spent caring is a moment invested in someone's wellbeing."