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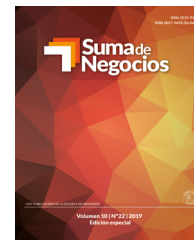
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# SUMA DE NEGOCIOS



## Research article

# Physical accessibility, key factor for entrepreneurship in people with disabilities

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the problem of people with disabilities in terms of physical accessibility to education, information, and use of ICT, asking themselves if these barriers have an impact on the entrepreneurship of this group. For this, 15 people have been interviewed related to the world of disability and entrepreneurship. The methodology used has been the semi-structured, individualized and oral in-depth interview. The analysis of the discourse has been carried out with the professional software Atlas.TI, and it is clear that among the barriers experienced by the interviewees are those that prevent them from having the knowledge and information necessary to undertake. In all cases, it is a matter of highlighting the possible proposals that allow putting in value the strategies that these entrepreneurs have set in motion, as well as the problems they have found.

## Accesibilidad física, factor clave para el emprendimiento en personas con discapacidad

### RESUMEN

### Palabras clave:

Discapacidad,  
inserción social,  
emprendimiento,  
barreras físicas,  
accesibilidad.

El presente artículo analiza la problemática de las personas con discapacidad en cuanto a la accesibilidad física a la educación, información y uso de las TIC, preguntándose si estas barreras repercuten en el emprendimiento de este colectivo. Para ello, se entrevistaron 15 personas relacionadas con el mundo de la discapacidad y el emprendimiento. Como metodología se empleó la entrevista en profundidad semiestructurada, individualizada y oral. El análisis del discurso se realizó con el *software* profesional Atlas.Ti, y del mismo, se desprende que entre las barreras experimentadas por los entrevistados se encuentran las que les impiden tener los conocimientos e información necesarios para emprender. En todos los casos, se trata de poner de manifiesto las posibles propuestas que permitan valorar las estrategias que estos emprendedores han puesto en marcha, así como los problemas que han encontrado.

## Introduction

In recent years, as Alonso (2007, p. 16) states from Europe:

Different political and legislative initiatives have been launched to achieve the equalization of rights and opportunities for people with disabilities, an extended forgotten collective. One of discrimination that affects these people is the lack of accessibility to different environments, products, and services.

According to Villa (2003, pp. 398-399), the Spanish Committee of Representatives of the Disabled states that the educational level, the professional qualification deficient or unadapted to the demands of the productive system and the difficulties of accessibility (transport, adaptation of training centers or work...) pose a serious obstacle to the labor integration of this group.

Entrepreneurship is a form of access to employment, which is encouraged among different groups with difficulty accessing the labor market, such as women or disabled people. The employment allows the realization of a project of their own lives independently and autonomously, especially, in the case of people with disabilities. Therefore, the need is justified to study and work collectively in the full inclusion in the labor market of people with disabilities (Fernández, Cegarra & Vidal, 2015). In the present article, the analysis of the accessibility difficulties is deepened, and a review of the strategies carried out by the interviewed people is done to adapt to the environment as a critical factor for their entrepreneurship. To this end, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with people related to the world of disability and entrepreneurship, as well as professionals and institutional representatives related to disability.

The analysis of the speech was made with the professional software Atlas.TI, and it has been tried to discover those barriers related to the entrepreneurship that the interviewees have experienced, specifically those that prevent them from having the knowledge and information necessary to undertake. This article is based on the hypothesis that these physical barriers hinder access to education, information and ICT and, therefore, to entrepreneurship.

Based on the above, first, a literature review will be conducted to arrive at an approximation to state of the art, differentiating between the terms of disability and inability. Next, the scenario to be considered is shown to know the possible barriers that impede the social and labor insertion of people with disabilities, and subsequently an analysis of the results of interviews with entrepreneurs with physical disabilities is presented, which will help to understand better the difficulties and accessibility barriers contemplated by these entrepreneurs.

## Scenario to consider

The starting hypothesis of this project is based on the assumption that the acquisition, stimulation, and development of the competences of the groups that present a certain

degree of disability (deficiencies in function and structure, limitation in activities and limitations in participation) is critical in the generation of entrepreneurial activity. Both in its initial phase (entrepreneurial initiative) and in the way of undertaking (cooperative or individual entrepreneurship), in the type of activity (sector, innovation, internationalization), in the development of the company and, in short, in its long-term results in terms of survival and development. Next, a review of the concepts of disability, inability, and accessibility is presented, in order to study the physical barriers existing in the enterprise.

## Disability and inability

For Pico-Barrionuevo & Torres (2017, p. 191), disability is a concept that evolves and that results from the interaction between people with impairments and the barriers due to attitude and environment that prevent their full and active participation in society, on equal terms with others. For Zhao & Zhang (2018), the most noticeable change is the idea of inclusive education. Only when barriers are transcended can steps be taken towards inclusion and both persons with disabilities and the organization can experience positive results (Vornholt et al., 2017). Frequently, people with physical or sensory disabilities have been treated as incapable without being disabled. Some "diseases" or "disabilities," from the sociological point of view, that is, behaviors or situations that are considered socially legitimate deviations from normality and that must be "cured," may lack a biomedical basis; they can be simple social constructions (Alemany, 2018, pp. 214-215).

The philosophy emanating from the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides that the legal capacity of anyone not lost despite having diminished capacities that hinder self-government (Rueda, Zurro & Fernández, 2014, p. 82). This question has given rise to numerous debates; there is some discrepancy in the way of referring to people who experience some degree of functional limitation or restriction, the most accepted term "persons with disabilities." Currently, some groups speak of people with "different abilities," thus surpassing the terminology of a person with a disability (Polonio de Dios, 2016, pp. 176-177).

The so-called "social model" considers disability "as a phenomenon whose origin is largely due to social causes, which is not simply an attribute of the person, but a complex set of conditions, many of which are created by the social context" (Fuentes-García, 2016, p. 82). This model understands that disability is not a natural circumstance, but a social condition: a person has a disability as long as society has disabled it through barriers (Bregaglio-Lazarte, Constantino-Caycho, Galicia-Vidal & Beyá-González, 2016, p. 294).

At this point, it is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of disability and inability, although both refer together to the impairment of a person due to injuries, illnesses or deficiencies that limit their activity in the social, personal or work environment. This common link does not imply equalization between both (Vicente, Terradillos, Capdevila, Ramírez & López, 2010); disability does not imply the inability for work, but permanent inability does

imply recognition of disability (at least 33%), to obtain a compensatory benefit that seeks to correct the absence of salary or professional income. A person due to an accident, illness or supervening disability.

The concept of disability has evolved, from a paternalistic and assistance perspective to a new approach that contemplates the person with disabilities as an individual with skills, resources, and potentialities (Moreno-López et al., 2013, p. 4). It should be noted, considering the type of disability, that those associated with hearing and visual deficiencies accumulate the highest activity scores (47.5% and 37.8%, respectively) (Mercado, Aizpurúa & García, 2013, p. 97).

The difficulties that any citizen has in accessing the working world are increased in the case of persons with disabilities and are presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Barriers to access the labor market for people with disabilities**

Social	Differences between people, reasons for rejection, limited opportunities and social marginalization
Physical environment	That limit or impede access, mobility or communication
Psychosocial	Excessive family protection, educational and training deficiencies, demotivation, lack of information and professional orientation
Mental	Understood as the consequences that all this generates in the disabled person, which feeds his self-exclusion from the labor market and makes him excessively dependent on protection policies

Source: Self-made. Fundación Encuentro (2001, pp. 274-275), in Villa (2003, p.400).

### Physical accessibility

One of the programs that have been given a particular relevance has been the one that facilitates the access of people with disabilities to spaces and public services through the progressive removal of physical and communication barriers. As well as providing aid necessary techniques to live in the most independent way possible: implementation of the parking card for people with disabilities, granting special aid to promote mobility, communication and accessibility for people with disabilities (Martínez-Fernández, 2012, pp. 90-91).

This section is to focus primarily on the barriers that limit or prevent access, mobility or communication in the field education and the access to information, and that is considered necessary to achieve a future social and labor insertion, and that is relevant for a successful endeavor.

#### Physical accessibility to the educational environment

Access to any area involves removing physical barriers. The World Report on Disability of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011, p. 10) states that many buildings, transport systems, and information systems are not accessible to everyone. Lack of access to transportation is a common reason that discourages people with disabilities from

seeking work or from accessing health care. Little information is available in accessible formats, and many communication needs of people with disabilities are not met. Deaf people often have problems accessing a sign language interpretation service. Besides, people with disabilities have significantly lower rates of use of information and communication technologies.

Cardona-Pla & Ortells-Roca (2012, pp. 110-111) affirm that disabled people now access educational institutions prepared for them and where they are well treated.

a) Although all persons with disabilities can be considered as a group suffering from similar forms of oppression, there is a very varied typology of difficulties: visual deficit, motor deficit, mental dysfunction or personality disorder and, also, in very various degrees and with very different effects.

b) What has happened to the education of people with a sensory deficit? It is known that, in the history of education, the invention of specific techniques and instruments involved access to complex educational processes for people who, at first, seemed excluded from them. In its day, the sign language or the Braille system and, now, the significant progress of communication technologies, have made many of these people can pursue higher education.

#### Physical accessibility to the information

Currently, accessing information is essential for entrance to the labor market. As stated by Hassan-Montero & Martín-Fernández (2004), the limitations and misuse by the designers of the conventional web publishing technologies are giving rise to situations of inability to access information by users with disabilities.

This phenomenon aggravates the so-called "info-exclusion" or "digital divide," and involves discrimination against a large part of total users. As Vanderheiden (2000) points out, disability is not the only type of limitation that hinders accessibility. There are other limitations derived from the context of use, and the access device is used as hardware or software. This fact also affects people who do not have any disability. Therefore, the design based on the limitations derived from individual disabilities, is beneficial for society as a whole, since it will also facilitate its access by users who, without suffering these disabilities, are in unfavorable contexts of use and similar limitation. Consequently, the number of users benefited from this design mode would be higher than that represented by users with disabilities (Henry, 2002).

According to Jiménez-Lara & Huete-García (2018), the Olivenza Report 2016 data, show that 6 out of 10 people consider that their disability influences the non-use of the computer. This deficit in digital training limits the process of entrepreneurship or the promotion of job prospects that provide people with the necessary skills for their labor inclusion.

Accessibility is a precondition for participation in society and the economy; the European Union has a long way to go to achieve it. The Commission (2010, p. 5) proposes to use legislative and other instruments, such as standardization, to optimize accessibility to the built envi-

ronment, transport and ICT, in line with the flagship initiatives of the "Digital Agenda" and the "Union for innovation." Therefore, and aware of the importance of access to training and information of this group, from Europe, within the European Platform for Disability (Supporting Self-Employment For Disabled People), it is intended to promote the employability of people with disabilities through education and the use of ICT, thus favoring entrepreneurship, its integration in the labor market and social inclusion.

## Methodology

In this work was used a qualitative methodology based on the in-depth, semi-structured, individualized and oral interview, applied to 15 people related to the world of disability and entrepreneurship. Specifically, three profiles were identified:

- People with disabilities and experience in entrepreneurship and their families.
- People with disabilities without experience in entrepreneurship.
- Professionals and institutional representatives related to disability (doctor, work counselor, and social worker).

The discourse analysis was carried through with the professional software Atlas.TI, and was executed on the textual levels (from codified citations) and conceptual (the level at which the relationships between codes and citations were worked on).

Finally, the design of the interview script has responded to the different dimensions from which entrepreneurship is addressed and its characteristics in this group: personal and psychological; institutional/legal; environmental culture; educational/formative; economic and family. These aspects, together with the analysis of the differences in the entrepreneurship of the collective and the prospective of this activity, are treated in the different articles that make up this monograph.

## Analysis of results

The entrepreneurship of people with disabilities is contemplated under certain discriminatory presumptions if compared to the one developed by those who do not have these characteristics, when the intensity of action, survival, and results obtained is equal or higher. After the analysis of the discourse made by the interviewees, it can affirm that there is a barrier to entrepreneurship when it is found a direct relationship between the lack of access to training and information of this group and their possibilities to undertake.

### Physical aspects

Among the physical aspects relevant to entrepreneurship, some of the interviewees understand that the physical is not an impediment when it is decided not to undertake a type of activity or sector in which one is not trained, but

that if someone decides to undertake it is because he has overcome the possible barriers:

The physical is relative, depends on what you are going to face. The physical... no, because that is a barrier that you have overcome, if you think to do that it is because you have overcome it (I.11).

The limiting physical aspects (or referents to the senses), referred to here, are those that limit or inhibit entrepreneurship in people with disabilities, as is the case with disabled people who work for others. Adaptation of the workplace (I.10), avoid physical obstacles (I.3), and ensure the use by the entrepreneur of the knowledge that over the years have allowed him to survive:

That person who has a disability because maybe he is also a few years old and knew how to do one thing, but that thing may well prevent him physically (I.15).

It must take into account the potential that, in certain sectors of activity, the person with disabilities may possess, being able to be on equal terms with people without disabilities, which may favor the entrepreneurship of people with disabilities in these sectors.

In a consultancy, consulting or industrial-related company that does not require physical effort, which has a dimension in which the boss does not need to be in any way in the production chain because then there is more, it is easy for disability to be compatible with entrepreneurship (I.2).

It is also observed that specific physical disabilities may favor the development of other aspects that benefit the realization of a particular type of activity is as one of the interviewees' comments concerning deaf people:

They speak very well of the deaf people in the cases of IT issues because as they do not hear they concentrate very well (I.5).

It is essential to take into account also in persons with disabilities, that their degree of personal autonomy will determine the limitations or potentialities, which can contribute to lead the possible entrepreneurship towards sectors or activities in which the disability does not suppose a clear impediment. Increasing personal autonomy can be achieved through education, as another interviewee says:

Educating non-family protection, promoting autonomy much more than we already do (I.4)

Once they reach comprehension reading and writing, they can learn by themselves (I.5).

On the other hand, as it can not be otherwise, the degree of disability will, in turn, determine the degree of autonomy, so that it can be understood as a limiting factor the higher the degree of disability:

It may be, for example, that your disability is getting worse and worse, for example, that it starts with a certain degree of limitation and if that disability goes on more and more, it may impact on you, on your chances of moving forward with entrepreneurship, it would be a limitation (I.3).

## Accessibility

One of the fundamental concepts of this article refers to the difficulties of accessibility that a disability implies and its relevance for entrepreneurship in a transversal way, and generally as an inhibiting factor, which translates into an improvement in accessibility (for example, to the training) can contribute to increase the entrepreneurship of people with disabilities.

The interviewees make references to training as a facilitator of access to employment:

Accessibility for me is that it is transversal. The accessibility will be in the educational barriers; it will be in everything (I.7).

I recently did a training for entrepreneurs in which they help you get oriented where you have to go with permits, projects and others, and in that training I found that problem, which is all designed for people who work well, but in this case, I insist that for people who have visual problems because it was hard to see the information, tiny print (I.9).

Training is the first point that all training programs consider to be accessible (I.10).

If there is a visual deficiency, so computers must be accessible if a blind person can not access it... if he is deaf, it must be subtitled... (I.10).

Although there are more and more adapted buildings, it is still considered as an impediment to the access of people with physical disabilities, which refer to architectural barriers:

A building that is fully equipped so that, for example, people in a wheelchair can access it very quickly and to the extent that they are ICT projects that do not require any particular physical need for the start-up or work. However, you have to be with the computer; I think there has not been any barrier to entry for people with these disabilities to work in companies (I.6).

It also represents a barrier for the blind disabled, according to the experience of some of our interviewees, the difficulty in accessing certain digital documents or specific business management programs.

Computer communication, through the internet and all this. Not everything is accessible to blind people, far from it. Everything that has to do with files that go in image format, jpg and all that, we can not read it. We prefer that all documents sent to us be accessible to us. Then, for example, the relations with the banks, to me, it makes me laugh. Also, many banks you go, they make you take numbers (I.8).

In some cases, the development of technology allows overcoming this barrier for the blind people, with the incorporation of specific programs that improve their self-esteem and facilitate their incorporation into society,

employment, entrepreneurship and, in general, facilitate their daily life, as it can be seen below:

The mobile, because now almost all blind people have airphone due to it has an accessibility that is the wilsober and with the wilsober you can manage the agenda, voice recordings, telephone numbers, and many applications. So there are several applications, even to read letters, for public transport, much more than when I started, so... (I.8).

Lately there has been much progress in new technologies. Many platforms are already accessible, there are many programs already adapted, and the ONCE in that is a total leader (I.4).

Accessibility also refers to the possibility of reaching information, and mainly to the difficulty of obtaining it or the inability to locate information when it is not adapted to certain types of disability.

Well, the limitations, from my point of view, the most considerable is also very related to the geographical aspect because when you live in a city you have much more access to information, resources, training, and then it can be a considerable limitation living in a small, isolated place, with little communication (I.15).

A person lacking vision or low vision, a blind person or a person with low vision the first handicap is the access to the information (I.4).

Finally, the mobility of people with disabilities was reviewed, and how this can be a limiting factor or can be a factor that facilitates entrepreneurship. Next, another of the contributions made during the interviews is presented:

When you travel around the world and other cities, you realize that there are some that are better prepared than others, for mobility issues, and in this sense, I also relate it to the type of business you want to develop (I.6).

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## Conclusions

After the analysis of the interviews, it can be concluded that physical accessibility hinders both the autonomy of people with disabilities and their access to the labor market through entrepreneurship. The results of this investigation confirm the existence of different barriers.

Thus, the lack of access to transport discourages people with disabilities to continue their training, to seek work or set up a business on their own or prevents them from accessing health care or leisure and free time activities.

The deficit in digital training also limits the process of entrepreneurship or the promotion of job prospects that provide people with the necessary skills for their labor inclusion. In this sense and due to its relevance at present, there are European projects that aim to promote the employability of people with disabilities through education and the use of ICT, thus favoring entrepreneurship, its integration in the labor market and social inclusion. For Batanero, Graván &

El Homrani (2017) an essential aspect in the educational field is the permanent training of teachers to develop a quality education in equity and equality. In this context, ICTs open up a new way of accessing information and a high communication bridge, since for some people technologies are the only way to access the educational world and culture.

Regarding access to education, another of the barriers with which this group is located is configured. It requires the information and training of teachers in particular, and society in general, regarding disability as crucial elements for active social inclusion and personal development of people with disabilities. The university, as an educational institution, has to facilitate the incorporation of all students, according to Lorenzo-Lledó, Carreres, Lledó & Vera (2017), making it an accessible environment without barriers in learning, developing curricular designs where a response is given to all the students.

Roldán-Martínez (2017, p. 6) states that although there has been a slight improvement, people with disabilities continue to have severe difficulties in accessing the labor market. Entrepreneurship is presented as a professional alternative, starting from the low rates of employment of the active population with disabilities, which should be more empowered by public authorities. According to Domínguez-Jara (2017, p. 187), society must change the prejudice that people with disabilities are incapable beings. However, on the contrary, they have skills that they can develop with the appropriate means. This transformation will allow people with disabilities to be recognized as an active part of their development and their community.

In summary, it can be said that there is a direct relationship between accessibility, training and social inclusion of this group after the analysis of the interviews conducted. To the physical limitations that a disability implies, accessibility barriers are added, understood as architectural barriers in public or private construction, transportation, and communication. Among these limitations or external barriers, communication acquires particular relevance, since it prevents the sending or receiving of messages and access to information and training, having as a consequence a higher difficulty to develop the activities of life.

The adaptation of the legislation on guardianship and incapacitation to the United Nations Convention for Persons with Disabilities implies moving from a model of assistance and rehabilitation to a social model, based on autonomy, self-determination, equality, the promotion, in short, to a model based on the rights of citizens (Fuentes-García, 2016, p. 82; Rueda et al., 2014, p. 106).

Aid is needed to adapt infrastructures, jobs, furniture or transport, among others. The lack of accessibility or adaptation of the environment implies less possibility of access to education, the labor market and, therefore, a remuneration adequate to their needs.

It is necessary, therefore, to reverse one of the aspects that limit access to the labor market for people with disabilities, such as access to higher education. In short, in all cases of deficiencies of a physical nature, the problematic axis around which the plot of integration (deficient) is structured is personal autonomy. Since, although in each stage of the

life cycle the expectations around the autonomy are different, as they are also among the people who do not have a disability, it is an essential element from the quality of life. Well, talking about autonomy means referring to areas as varied as work, education, social communication and, of course, accessibility, which brings together all these vital aspects.

For all these reasons, as future lines of work, it is proposed the study of the adaptation of the environment from the prevention, developing and constructing initially, from an inclusive point of view, where the needs and interests of all possible users are taken into account more than the creation of specific environments, products, and services for people with disabilities.

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