

Introduction

"Diversity Management is not an option... it is a business imperative for any organization that wants to maintain sustained growth in the new socio-economic order." European Institute for Diversity Management.

Corporate Social Responsibility is understood as the way to manage a company based on the management of the impacts it generates on its environment, the societies where it carries out its activity and the relationships of trust with the actors related to it. This management must, at least, comply with the provisions of the applicable legislation, be global and transversal in nature around the organisation and comply ethically and coherently with the expectations and needs for which it was set up.

This idea of CSR is based on three areas or pillars, the same ones that support the well-known notion of sustainability: the social, economic and environmental spheres, which are interdependent and connected¹.

In this way, and as we will see below, congruent action in any of the different areas has an interrelation that has positive effects on others, providing feedback to the bases on which organisations develop their activity.

In this sense, and although focusing only partially on the social sphere, the promotion of actions that contribute to improving it generates a leverage effect on the rest of the organisation's areas that exponentially multiplies the positive return, creating shared value.

The social dimension of CSR includes the humanitarian context of companies, relating to issues related to equal opportunities and the management of negative externalities associated with the globalisation of economic development, so that the development of solid relationships that are beneficial to society as a whole is crucial to good governance².

It is at this point, and within the social sphere of CSR, that the value of inclusion and the promotion of diversity become the backbone of the company.

Attention to these two closely related concepts has traditionally been linked to the public sector. However, with the arrival of CSR in the private corporate world, the foundations have been laid for increasing integration in labour markets and promoting the social inclusion of vulnerable groups³.

Diversity can be understood as the compilation of intrinsic characteristics of different individuals, ranging from gender, ethnicity, or the presence of conditions of disability, to age, culture or social class. Accordingly, and based on the importance of the role of the human

¹ Corporate Social Responsibility Observatory, (2016). *What is CSR*. <https://observatoriorsc.org/la-rsc-que-es/>

² E. Suarez et. al, (2015) *Does CSR foster inclusion and diversity? An exploratory study of Ibero-American countries*. IESE Business School, University of Navarra. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2598466.

³ Dreher, M.T., et. al, (2013). *Working in the tourism sector: Social inclusion and prejudice*. Tourism Notebooks 32, pp.281-294.

factor within the tourism industry, diversity is configured as an essential characteristic of the sector's sustainability⁴.

For its part, **social inclusion** is defined by the World Bank in 2013 as "the process of improving the capacity, opportunities and dignity of people who are disadvantaged for reasons of identity for their participation in society"⁵.

Thus, the effective application of these notions under the umbrella of CSR in organisations, helps to drive social change, especially determinant for the group that is the subject of our study, people with disabilities⁶.

This concept is vital, especially in the context of the inversion of the world population pyramid, the increase in dependency and disability rates associated with lifestyle and the progressive trend towards social heterogeneity⁷.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared in 2011 disability as part of the human condition, given that most of us will suffer some kind of disability throughout our lives, either permanently or transiently⁸.

The definition of disability provided by the WHO includes the presence of structural or temporary impairments of bodily function, limitations to the free activity of actions or tasks, and restrictions to participation in vital activities, clarifying complexity, mismatches and barriers between the interaction of human organic functional characteristics and the characteristics and impositions of society and the environment where they live⁹.

The World Bank puts the number of people with disabilities at 15% of the world's population, which represents an absolute figure of around one billion citizens¹⁰, so it is undoubtedly a group that must necessarily be welcomed by organisational practices and actions, for the sake of an inclusive and quality global industry.

For all these reasons, and with the aim of contributing to the achievement of effective business training and awareness in this area, the principles and fundamental bases on which to build a fair, coherent and participatory CSR for people with disabilities are set out below.

⁴ E. Suarez et. al, (2015) *Does CSR foster inclusion and diversity? An exploratory study of Ibero-American countries*. IESE Business School, University of Navarra. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2598466.

⁵ World Bank (2013). *Inclusion matters : the foundation for shared prosperity - overview*. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/175121468151499527/pdf/817480WP0Spani0IC00InclusionMatters.pdf>

⁶ WBCSD, (2016). *Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals: The Inclusive Business approach*. ISBN: 978-2-940521-63-0.

⁷ Cruz Ortiz, M., et. al, (2017). *Disability, chronicity and aging: the emergence of care in the face of dependency*. 26 (1-2), pp.53-57. ISSN 1699-5988.

⁸ World Health Organization, (2011). *World report on disability*. Malta. https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/summary_es.pdf?ua=1.

⁹ World Health Organization, (2023). *Disability*. <https://www.who.int/es/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>

¹⁰ World Bank (2022). *Disability*. <https://www.bancomundial.org/es/topic/disability#:~:text=El%2015%20%25%20de%20la%20poblaci%C3%B3n,que%20las%20personas%20sin%20discapacidad>.

2. Principles of Corporate Social Responsibility:

From an inclusive and broadened perspective, it is possible to define the different principles on which CSR is based under the approach of persons with disabilities.

In particular, the basic principles of CSR in the social sphere revolve around corporate social commitment, labour rights and working conditions for people with disabilities, environmental and related political responsibility, as well as the preservation and promotion of local economic development.

a. Social commitment

The perspective of CSR linked to the management of diversity and inclusion must be based on the conception of the company as a group of people who interact with each other and with the environment, i.e. with the society in which they carry out their activity.

In this sense, a **double social commitment** is envisaged: the management of human resources, from an internal perspective within the organisation; and the management of relations with the society in which it is located, from an external perspective, both of which take on special relevance in the face of current and future social challenges¹¹.

External social commitment, linked to relations with society, is intrinsic to the generation of responsible relations with its different actors or members. According to the consultancy firm Gartner, the implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives within organisations brings a great deal of value. Specifically, it contributes to an increase of up to 6.2% in collective effort at work, 5% in talent retention and around 3% in individual job performance. This indicates that the more diverse, equitable and inclusive a workplace is, the more employees feel a substantial part of it, which brings even greater benefits¹²:

- Inclusive and diverse organisations are 120% more likely to achieve their financial goals.
- In terms of innovation, implementing diversity is directly proportional to the speed and efficiency of innovation.

On the other hand, internal social commitment or from within the corporate activity in relation to people with disabilities, includes the task of human resources management that promotes awareness, impulse, education in values and expression of new forms of labour and therefore social interaction.

- **CSR in relation to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace.**

Although it is true that over the last few decades there has been a gradual increase in the number of public and private entities whose objective is the integration of people with

¹¹ CEOE & CEPYME Cantabria (2011). *Corporate social responsibility and integration of people at risk of social and labour exclusion*.

¹² WellRight, (2022). *CSR, ESG, and DEI: Your Key to the Workplace Culture Employees Want*. <https://www.wellright.com/blog/csr-esg-dei-key-workplace-culture-employees>

disabilities into the labour market, and that there are numerous policies and initiatives to promote this at different levels of competence, there is still a long way to go.

In Spain, it is estimated that there are more than 4.12 million people with some kind of recognised disability, i.e. with a degree of disability equal to or greater than 33%, which is around 9% of the national population¹³, a figure that rises to 87 million people in the European Union, representing around 20% of the population of the Union¹⁴.

The employment rate of people with disabilities in Spain in 2020 was only 26.7%. This population group is also influenced by other aggravating factors such as gender differences, where the percentage of working women is more than 10 percentage points lower than that of men, the level of education attained, the bulk of which includes training actions for labour integration or higher education, or age, with the most vulnerable age range being that of young people aged between 16 and 24¹⁵.

On the other hand, the data at the European level do not show much improvement. In 2020, only 50.6% of disabled people in the EU were in employment, compared to 74.8% of non-disabled people. This ratio, although more optimistic than the national ratio, is conditioned by other factors such as the risk of poverty, which reaches 28.4% of the group (compared to 17.8% of people without disabilities), establishing a percentage of 52% in terms of the feeling of discrimination in this area, especially among women, young people and people with great support needs, constituting one of the most disadvantaged groups in terms of employment¹⁶.

The capacity of this group to generate opportunities for the labour market and society is extensive. The International Labour Organisation estimates that there are some 386 million people with disabilities of working age in the world, people with the potential to enter the labour market and the will to contribute to the development of their countries¹⁷. However, in some countries the unemployment rate of people with disabilities is as high as 80% of the working age population¹⁸.

In this respect, it is worth highlighting the quantitative and qualitative size of this population group, together with the different specifications and needs in terms of employment.

b. Labour rights and working conditions

¹³ Olivenza Report, (2019). *On the general situation of disability in Spain*
<https://www.observatoriodeladiscapacidad.info/informe-olivenza-2019-sobre-lasituacion-general-de-la-discapacidad-en-espana/>.

¹⁴ European Commission (n.d.). *Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion*.
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=es>

¹⁵ National Statistics Institute (2021). *Employment of persons with disabilities*.
https://www.ine.es/prensa/epd_2020.pdf

¹⁶ European Parliament, (2020). *Employment and disability in the European Union*.
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651932/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)651932_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651932/EPRS_BRI(2020)651932_EN.pdf)

¹⁷ De Lorenzo, R., (2004). *The future of disabled people in the world: employment as a determining factor for inclusion*. Journal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
https://sid-inico.usal.es/idocs/F8/ART11351/futuro_discapacitados_mundo.pdf

¹⁸ CEOE & CEPYME Cantabria (2011). *Corporate social responsibility and integration of people at risk of social and labour exclusion*.

"Without decent employment, the full integration and participation of persons with disabilities in society is not feasible". De Lorenzo, R., (2016), p.1.

When it comes to facilitating the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market, a company has the possibility of approaching this task through different courses of action. Thus, it can hire staff with disabilities, open a line of action or business dedicated to the labour integration of this group, collaborate with specialised entities, carry out social action actions or develop products, furniture or technologies in line with their needs that contribute to improving their access to the labour market.

In this sense, we proceed to outline the main ideals at international and national level on which to lay the foundations for the achievement of this goal.

- Basic principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The right to decent work and employment is a fundamental right enshrined in Article 27 of the 2006 UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Although many policies and actions emanate from this first Convention and will be further elaborated later (see section "e. Political accountability"), this first treaty was the first comprehensive human rights declaration of the 21st century. It contains eight guiding principles that underpin each of its articles¹⁹, including respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy and independence, including the freedom to make one's own decisions; the right to non-discrimination; full and effective participation and inclusion in society, with the workplace being a key area for this; and respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity, among others.

For its part, the aforementioned article 27 includes the right to the opportunity to earn a living by work of one's choice in an inclusive and accessible labour market and work environment. To this end, States Parties must safeguard and promote the right to work by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation, to²⁰:

- 1) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of hiring, continued employment, career advancement and job security.
- 2) Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis, with fair working conditions including equal opportunity and equal pay for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, and redress of grievances.
- 3) Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis.
- 4) Enable persons with disabilities to have access to technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and continuing vocational training.

¹⁹ United Nations, (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html>

²⁰ United Nation, (2006). *Article 27, work and employment*. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-27-work-and-employment.html>

- 5) Promote employment and career advancement opportunities for people with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment.
- 6) Promote opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship.
- 7) Employ people with disabilities in the public sector.
- 8) Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures (action programmes, incentives or other measures).
- 9) Ensure the provision of reasonable accommodation in the workplace.
- 10) Promote the acquisition of work experience in the open labour market.

- EU initiatives for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market

In addition to those legislative issues emanating from the EU, there are a number of initiatives aimed at the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market that require the support of the Member States. These include²¹:

- a. Adaptations in the workplace. The European Directive on Equal Employment and the Directive on Health and Safety at Work require reasonable accommodation of the needs of disabled workers in order to ensure their effective inclusion.
- b. Accessibility. Based on the Directive on Accessibility of Goods and Services, the promotion of universal accessibility in all tangible internal and labour markets of the Union is essential.
- c. Non-discrimination in employment. On the basis of the Directive on Equality and Employment, discrimination on the grounds of disability is prohibited, with the failure to adopt reasonable accommodation being understood as constituting discrimination.
- d. Public Employment Services. From a non-binding position, the EU network of public employment services is created for cooperation and exchange of good practices in the field of disability.
- e. Financial incentives. Derived from the Commission regulation on the categories of financial support compatible with the internal market for organisations, which are managed at state level by Member States.
- f. EU funding. Under the European Structural and Investment Funds, different financial resources are made available to support the participation of people with disabilities in the labour market through the establishment of labour market policies and investment in infrastructure.

- Initiatives for labour market inclusion at national level: the case of Spain

Without wishing to be exhaustive, we present the main initiatives and actions in the field of labour market inclusion in Spain, in order to give the reader a general idea of the need and benefits of this labour market promotion²².

²¹ European Parliament, (2020). *Employment and disability in the European Union*.

²² Ministry of Labour and Social Economy, (2022). *Guide to labour integration of people with disabilities*. <https://www.sepe.es/HomeSepe/que-es-el-sepe/comunicacion-institucional/publicaciones/publicaciones-oficiales/listado-pub-empleo/integracion-laboral-discapacidad/guia-integracion-laboral-personas-discapacidad.html>

- a. Quota system. According to Article 42 of Royal Legislative Decree 1/2013, which approves the Revised Text of the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion, it is compulsory for public or private companies with 50 or more employees to reserve at least 2% for workers with disabilities, unless there is a collective agreement or the employer wishes to apply alternative measures, specifying a reservation of 7% of public vacancies for people with disabilities.
- b. Hiring of employees. A framework of Social Security subsidies and bonuses is established. Specifically, and with regard to the subsidies that are managed by the autonomous communities, for each permanent full-time contract of a person with a disability, the employer will receive €3,907. If the permanent contract is part-time, the amount will be reduced proportionally. In addition, the employer is offered an allowance of up to €902 for the adaptation of the workplace. The system of rebates on social security contributions during the term of the contract varies according to the degree of disability, the age range of the employees hired and whether they are male or female. The range is between €4,500 and €6,300 per year. Likewise, deductions of €9,000 per person per year from the total amount of corporation tax are established when the average number of employees with a degree of disability of at least 33% has been increased, or €12,000 if they have a degree of disability of at least 65%.

Benefits and subsidies linked to the signing of temporary contracts, alternating training contracts, contracts for professional internships or replacement contracts, as well as incentives for the adaptation of jobs, although these are of lesser use, are also envisaged.

c. Environmental responsibility

The intention of this section is to address the question: does the inclusion of people with disabilities have a benefit on the environmental aspect of CSR, and is there a correlation between the two variables?

The answer seems clear but not clear-cut. Managing CSR from a sustainable perspective is not only a trend, but also an urgent necessity. Environmental degradation, the climate crisis and social inequalities are becoming increasingly difficult tasks, in which companies play an essential role. Furthermore, and beyond the social benefit of undertaking actions in a responsible and ethical manner, this management generates a direct impact on corporate financial success, as it fosters a positive perception of stakeholders and the company's environment, improving its image and the esteem of its value in society. Likewise, and in relation to environmental preservation, it contributes to reducing operating costs, improving long-term efficiency and thus the distribution and consumption of resources.

In this sense, the implementation of a diverse and inclusive workforce throughout the supply chain of any organisation has a sustainable component. The implementation of fair trade and supplier proximity practices, as well as the involvement of employees in the sustainability process in the form of training and environmental education programmes, promote positive actions on the health of our planet.

In addition, the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market is an opportunity for training and education of local residents, which is often accompanied by the implementation of public policies that favour or have a positive impact on the organisations that provide goods and services.

All this seems to indicate that there is a relationship between the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market and CSR in the environmental field.

d. Local economy - preservation of local enterprises

At this point, it seems appropriate to reflect on the benefits and contributions of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the field of CSR management. On the one hand, this management makes it possible to take advantage of the talent and human and professional commitment of these people, while contributing to organisational diversity. On the other hand, it opens the door to a new market comprising the largest minority in the world: that of people with disabilities.

In this way, it generates a supply market (and also a demand market) for accessible products and services that are beneficial, like the vast majority of actions in this field, for the entire population. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the progressive ageing of the population, whose forecasts suggest that most of the children born in the year 2000 are expected to live to be over 100 years old²³, both in terms of the growing population with a disability and in terms of the demand for and valuation of universal products and services²⁴.

From an internal organisational perspective, managing diversity and inclusion in companies is a key element for value creation. The generation of inclusive jobs not only promotes the fight against discrimination in all its forms, with its consequent positive social impact, and therefore, for the CSR of corporations, but also presents opportunities and competitive advantages with direct repercussions on the different organisations that exercise them. Some of the benefits derived from the implementation of these diverse and inclusive practices include the increase in innovation, creativity and collaboration within organisations, the attraction and recruitment of talent, the increase in competitiveness by including heterogeneous profiles in their organisational structures that encourage the opening of new markets, and the adaptation to new global needs²⁵.

There are many ways to promote inclusion in the workplace. Some companies, managed in an intelligent way, intelligence being understood as *"the ability to learn, adapt and develop common sense; to understand the times and society in which we live and interact with their environments, combining knowledge to achieve objectives"* (Blanco, 2015, p.21)²⁶ have

²³ World Economic Forum. *How to meet the challenges of a 100-year life? An expert explains*. (2022). <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/the-100-year-life-is-here-how-can-we-meet-the-challenges-of-longevity-an-expert-explains/>

²⁴ Loste, C. (2016). *What is CSR in Disability, or CSR-D? Why is it important? How can it help my company to focus CSR on Disability?* <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/qu%C3%A9-es-la-rse-en-discapacidad-o-rse-d-por-importante-puede-oste-/?originalSubdomain=es>

²⁵ Seres, (2019). *Diversity in the company as a lever for value creation - Blog*. <https://www.fundacionseres.org/BlogSeres/index.php/la-diversidad-en-la-empresa-como-palanca-de-reacion-de-valor/>

²⁶ Blanco Herranzs, F. J., (2015). *White Paper on smart destinations*. Strategies and solutions to promote innovation in digital tourism. LID Editorial.

already adapted their actions towards inclusion, shaping more productive, sustainable and egalitarian business units.

Many of them, in fact, share their experiences, their recipes with other organisations so that, through the replication of their good practices, these can become more diverse and inclusive²⁷.

In this regard, the FiturNext 2022 Observatory report "*Towards a more accessible society*" stands out. Specifically, the Observatory was created under two essential premises: the dissemination of good sustainable practices in tourism that have a positive impact, and that they are replicable, i.e. that they provide the rest of the actors in society with the possibility of applying these actions in other contexts and in other environments, in order to achieve exponential positive growth.

Thus, the aforementioned report highlights some organisations that include in their CSR strategies, actions for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace²⁸.

- Sentir el Alto Tajo. A tourism SME that offers interpretative routes and inclusive experiences in a rural environment, i.e. without differentiating whether or not users have any type of disability. Specifically, they bring the value of the natural environment, flora and fauna closer to any person regardless of the state of their abilities through adapted tools and materials. Similarly, they organise the trip from end to end, i.e. ensuring accessibility throughout the entire tourism value chain. In addition to inclusive experiences, they carry out educational and awareness-raising tasks in schools, institutes and other public institutions, so that they bring the value of disability closer to society and disseminate knowledge about it.
- Equalitas Vitae. Consultancy specialising in the creation of accessible products and services and certification of inclusive destinations, accommodation and experiences. It not only considers the inclusion of people with disabilities in its permanent staff, but also counts on the participation of people from the group for the co-creation of internal and external improvements to the organisation. In addition, they offer specialised training in accessibility by sector and activity, providing companies with the necessary notions for their transformation towards inclusion and diversity.

Other examples of organisations that have acted in this way are:

- Ilunion Facility Services. Belonging to the ONCE Foundation's group of social companies, it offers accommodation, cleaning, security and outsourcing services. This business group revolves around a business model based on the social economy, whose firm commitment translates into the employment of more than 4,000 people with disabilities, placing it at the head of corporations in terms of the number of people with disabilities employed. Specifically, this figure accounted for 28.4% of

²⁷ International Labour Organization, (n.d.). *Inclusion of persons with disabilities: benefits for all*. InfoStories.

<https://www.ilo.org/infostories/es-ES/Stories/Employment/The-win-win-of-disability-inclusion>

²⁸ FiturNext Observatory, (2022). *Towards a more accessible tourism*.

<https://www.ifema.es/fitur-next/doc/digital-informe-fiturnext-2022/digital-informe-fiturnext.pdf>

all its employees in 2017. In this way, they offer competitive services based on socially and ethically responsible models that generate value for society²⁹.

- **INDRA**. A technology consulting company considered one of the most sustainable in the world within its sector according to the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) World³⁰, which is an international recognition of its economic, social and environmental commitment, by contributing through technology to the 2030 Agenda and generating a positive impact on people and the planet. This organisation aims to promote actions that minimise the digital divide. For this reason, it wishes to contribute to resolving the difficulties or limitations of access to information and communication technologies, and to reduce the differences that exist between different groups of people according to their technological capabilities, for which it joins forces to make it accessible to all. To this end, it is developing a programme called Accessible Technologies, whose line of work includes different actions, including facilitating the incorporation of people with disabilities into the world of work. Specifically, it offers different actions that enable people with disabilities to generate new competencies and skills in the digital world, while investing in social actions for the creation of new accessible projects, all focused on the different types of existing disabilities. In this way, and under the premise that technology is necessary, effective and very useful, it generates a positive impact on society, emphasising its emphasis on this group³¹.

e. Political responsibility

As mentioned above, the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* was a milestone and set the basis for future actions in the field of employability of this population group. As a result, many governmental organisations began to promote public policies in favour of the struggle for equal rights and opportunities.

In this regard, the rights of people with disabilities have been enshrined in the EU Treaties since 1997, and have also been reinforced in the EU *Charter of Fundamental Rights* of 2000, whose legal value is shared with the Treaties, requiring Member States to act and safeguard it. Subsequently, in 2010, the aforementioned Convention was signed and ratified with binding force, following which a series of legal provisions, initiatives, actions and strategies were introduced in order to improve the working conditions of people with disabilities.

In 2010, the *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020* was published with the aim of empowering people with disabilities for equal access to employment and increasing the participation of people with disabilities in the labour market³².

²⁹ ILUNION, (2017). *Ilunion exceeds 4000 workers with disabilities in its businesses*.

<https://www.ilunion.com/es/ilunion-supera-los-4000-trabajadores-con-discapacidad-en-sus-tradicional-es-negocios-de-limpieza>

³⁰ Indra, (2021). *Indra, the world's most sustainable company in the technology sector, according to the Dow Jones Sustainability Index*.

³¹ Indra, (n.d.). *Accessible technologies*. <https://www.tecnologiasaccesibles.com/es>

³² European Parliament, (2020). *Employment and disability in the European Union*.

Based on the latter precedent and as a contribution to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in 2020 the Commission published the ambitious *Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030*, which aims to ensure the full participation of this group in society. This requires a strong commitment from the different Member States and coordinated action at national and EU level. It establishes different actions around three main themes: EU rights as fully equal citizens, the promotion of independent living and autonomy, and the promotion of non-discrimination and equal opportunities in all possible areas³³.

f. Social inclusion

People with disabilities, in the same way as the rest of the members of society who for some reason find themselves in a situation of social vulnerability, wish to see their demands for participation and equality met, fully participating in an inclusive, supportive and fair society, where wealth and opportunities are equally and equally distributed.

To this end, it is essential for public authorities and civil society to adopt a transformative attitude, based on an accessible and universal awareness.

Thus, in order to make real social inclusion effective, a series of inspiring criteria and principles are set out below as a general framework for action in the field of disability³⁴:

- **People with disabilities must be the protagonists of their own lives.** In the light of this statement, it is important to highlight the necessary co-creation of actions based on their participation, that of their family network and that of the associative movement, which have an in-depth and concise knowledge of the associated needs and requirements.
- **Presence and visibility in society.** The construction of a solid image of disability in the community enriches the value system of a society and allows progress to be made in the normalisation of that which differs from the norm.
- **Positive action and collaboration of all actors are essential elements of inclusion.** While the integrative drive for inclusion is the responsibility of the public authorities, it requires the involvement of all actors and spheres of the community. Furthermore, it must be a permanent issue on international agendas.
- **Disability must be a priority on the social agenda.** The increase in disability rates and in the social and economic gap linked to disability highlights the need for active action by governments and private companies through CSR strategies.
- **Need for new strategies and approaches,** especially oriented towards education, awareness-raising and training.
- **Education and employment as determining factors for inclusion and social integration process.** Based on equality and dignity as essential foundations for the effective exercise of freedom of action and decision.

³³ Friscic, J. (2021). *European Commission presents Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030*. Inclusion Europe.

<http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/european-commission-presents-strategy-for-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2021-2030/>

³⁴ De Lorenzo, R., (2016). *The future of disabled people in the world: employment as a determining factor for inclusion*. Journal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (50).

https://sid-inico.usal.es/idocs/F8/ART11351/futuro_discapitados_mundo.pdf

- **Universal accessibility and design for all, indispensable requirements of current and future societies.**
- **Emphasis on the value of employment as a currency of exchange and social progress.** Access to the labour market is of decisive importance in the process of integration and social normalisation, where priority must be given, for due normalisation, to ordinary employment as opposed to sheltered employment.
- **Not all jobs add value; they need to be quality jobs.**

Having expressed these criteria, it seems appropriate to outline some of the benefits and figures that, from a business perspective, inclusion and diversity in corporations bring.

In this sense, and as outlined above, diversity management in business environments is a sure source of innovation and creativity, attraction and retention of talent and, consequently, an increase in corporate competitiveness. Organisational diversity generates collaborative teams, consensual decisions based on plurality and the opening up of new opportunities and results, including those related to financial reporting³⁵.

In fact, McKinsey's *Delivering through diversity* study estimates that companies whose workforces include more than 25% diverse employees are up to 33% more likely to achieve above average financial results³⁶.

However, the numbers of diverse and inclusive teams are still far from what is desirable. According to the Adecco Foundation's 2018 *CSR, diversity and inclusion* report, 25% of Spanish companies consider that strategies along these lines are still an unknown area, with only 20% of them having started to include it in their agendas, with 12% of them considering presenting a multidisciplinary and diverse team. In fact, only 3% of the business sample included in the study consider diversity and inclusion as elements of CSR. Meanwhile, the clear conception of diversity management as a challenge and a difficulty stands out for 38% of the companies surveyed, compared to 30% who reject this notion, figures that oppose the idea of the contribution of these actions as a source of competitive advantage, which is affirmed by 83% of the corporations surveyed.

Among the factors that act as aggravating factors or barriers to the implementation of inclusion and diversity in Spanish workforces are fear of the unknown (20%), economic barriers (18%), prejudices and stereotypes (32%) and lack of interest on the part of management committees (34%)³⁷.

Within this framework, and after all the above, it is reaffirmed that the integration of people with disabilities in the workplace, as with other social groups that represent minority strata in our communities (such as women, seniors or older adults, groups of different ethnicities or sexual orientation, etc.), provides an added value that, although sometimes it cannot be quantified, can be attributed to positive qualities and benefits for all. In addition to being a commercial logic given the opportunity to access and retain talent, the increase in

³⁵ Seres, (2019). *Diversity in business as a lever for value creation*.

<https://www.fundacionseres.org/BlogSeres/index.php/la-diversidad-en-la-empresa-como-palanca-de-reaccion-de-valor/>

³⁶ McKinsey Company, (2018). *Delivering through Diversity*.

<http://www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity/41-ISDGBD/GBDEExternal/upload/McKinseyDeliverDiv201801-2.pdf>

³⁷ Adecco Foundation, (2018). *CSR, diversity and inclusion*.

<https://fundacionadecco.org/informes-y-estudios/informe-rsc-diversidad-inclusion/>

innovation, the improvement of the working environment, the feeling of belonging and the improvement of the image, among others³⁸.

Thus, it is confirmed that the employment of people with disabilities not only generates an enrichment of business skills, an increase in productivity or the creation of new knowledge, but also provides a multidirectional benefit, from companies to the environment, the local communities where they operate and society as a whole, providing a value that, while being constituted as a right, opens the door to a business and social philosophy that is egalitarian, accessible, sustainable and of quality.

³⁸ International Labour Organization, (n.d.). *Inclusion of persons with disabilities: benefits for all*. InfoStories. <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/es-ES/Stories/Employment/The-win-win-of-disability-inclusion>