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BEAUTIFULLY
DIVERSE

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For the first time in decades, the World Economic Forum has stated that the world is facing a precarious disequilibrium with growth and inflation moving in opposite directions. In this particular historical situation, it is essential not to abandon solidarity and attention to social inequalities. Building just, sustainable, resilient societies by working together is more important than ever.

Cooperation between people must be celebrated and strengthened, and it is essential to educate solidarity and empathy, recognising the value and dignity of each individual, regardless of ability or characteristics.

"Disability doesn't make you exceptional, but questioning what you think you know about it does."

Stella Young

TOWARDS A NEW REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITY

Disability is an issue that affects a large proportion of the global population, representing approximately 15% of people worldwide. Furthermore, the percentage is expected to grow as the population age and chronic diseases increase.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) established that disability results from the interaction between the individual characteristics of a person and the context in which they live. Material barriers, such as a broken elevator, or intangible obstacles, such as discrimination, can limit freedom of choice and the ability to act. Therefore, collective action and shared responsibility are needed to address this issue effectively.

Focusing on environment and context as determinants of disability means changing the dominant culture that expects and considers only performing bodies and minds and forgets the value of human diversity. That means recognising individual needs and re-think events, streets and collective places to make them accessible, shareable and enjoyable by anyone, with or without disabilities. An inclusive and careful approach to each person's needs can bring innovative and disruptive scenarios for everyone's benefit.

VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE DISABILITY

Disability can be visible, such as physical or invisible, such as mental health disorders, cognitive dysfunction, hearing and vision problems, and other health conditions, such as diabetes, intellectual-relational disability, chronic pain or fatigue. Specifically, people with disabilities have in common the lack of opportunities, low accessibility and discrimination that do not make possible a fulfilled and self-determined life.



SOCIAL JUSTICE, INCLUSIVE WORK AND DISABILITY

Social Justice is fundamental for any society that aims to ensure equality of opportunity and dignity for everyone, starting from the respect of human rights and freedom of participation, without distinction of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and disability.

In this sense, the working environment is fundamental to social inclusion. A paid job guarantees economic independence, freedom of choice and planning for the future, and self-esteem. However, today the labour world needs to be more inclusive. The buildings and working contexts are often inaccessible, and the search for personnel needs to meet the reality of a portion of the population which remains excluded.

BEYOND THE CONCEPT OF NORMALITY

In a dominant culture that defines what is “normal” and “healthy”, challenging inequalities demands much more than simple physical accessibility.

The concept of “normality” may seem innocuous, but it is a cultural construction harmful to those who do not conform to dominant standards. Today, only a minority of the population has the privilege to be considered “normal” or ordinary. The concept of normality is associated with health, rationality and independence, excluding non-standard bodies and minds and not considering that we all need care and support at different times in life.

Therefore, the first step in building a more just and inclusive society is to question these standards. Avoid stereotypes and **promote a narrative of disability that is neither positive nor negative but a simple expression of the diversity that characterises humanity.**

By recognising human diversity, we can understand and value the plurality of experiences and identities.

It is time to transcend the normal and embrace the beauty of diversity.

POSTERHEROES CALL

Let's build a society that celebrates the uniqueness of each individual, where everyone can be an active part of their community, and where resources and opportunities are accessible to all.

Let's learn to look beyond our beliefs about productivity and the self-success myth. Let's celebrate reciprocity and interdependence.

Let's promote body positivity and encourage the representation of physical/mental nonconformity.

Let's move away from the rhetoric of “we are all the same”: let's value a model of disability that embraces difference and challenges the concept of normality.

Not all disabilities are visible, and not all discriminations are explicit. Let's learn to respect others, generate (self)awareness about stigma and prejudices, and create change.

Let's spread the culture of diversity without idealising or romanticising it. Let's promote new authentic narratives, free from stereotypes and pietist references. In a word, transformative.



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