

**INCLUSION –
CREATING SPACES,
LIVING DREAMS**

DEAR SPECIAL OLYMPIANS ...

 BY ALEXANDER VAN DER BELLEN, FEDERAL PRESIDENT OF AUSTRIA



... from all over the world, dear organisers, volunteers, family members, carers, dear sport fans!

When the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games begin on the 14th of March, Austria will go down in the history of these great Games: as the first country after the United States of America to hold Special Olympics for a second time since 1993.

We are proud to be able to say that this honour was not granted by chance, but represents the outstanding work on the part of the many involved in caring for people with learning difficul-

ties. Over the decades, structures have been put in place that enable these people to be seen as valuable members of society. Sport in the context of Special Olympics plays a particular role in contributing to acceptance, respect and appreciation.

Nevertheless, in Austria too there remains much to be done to come closer to achieving a society where every individual is appreciated, whatever their strengths and weaknesses. All too often, people with learning disabilities are still put up with rather than encouraged, pitied instead of admired. The way in

which a society deals with people who have learning difficulties says a great deal about its maturity and strength.

I wish for the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria to be a further step towards an inclusive society. A step towards a society that understands and appreciates the value of every individual. This book will also contribute to this aim, highlighting the many facets of inclusion and encouraging discourse in society.

On behalf of the Republic of Austria, I would like to thank the or-

ganisers, the many volunteers, the athletes from all over the world, their family members, the carers, the sponsors, the supporters and all those watching, who will give the athletes an unforgettable experience in our beautiful country.

DEAR FRIENDS,



BY TIMOTHY SHRIVER, PRESIDENT OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS INTERNATIONAL

sport has power, sport has grit, but Special Olympics sport offers power, grit, joy and an opportunity for anyone involved, on or off the playing field, to be their best self.

Today, more than ever, the world is in need of Special Olympics and the lessons that can be learned through the athletes and all those involved, the transformation that can occur through the experiences and the inclusion our movement creates through celebrating people for doing their best.

As we approach our 50th Anni-

versary in 2018, I reflect on an amazing journey that we have been on and continue to travel throughout the world. Since the first Games in 1968 at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois our movement, and the athletes and families involved, continue to teach us every day what it means to be fully alive and to an agent of peace and welcome.

Despite being bullied two to three times more than others, denied health care, not counted or hidden away, our athletes with different abilities demonstrate that no matter your differ-

ences, strengths or weaknesses, or position in life, the ultimate message of inclusion is that it is not about who you beat, but how you competed.

As you enjoy the stories on the following pages of Coca-Cola's Book of Inclusion I encourage you to think about how these stories can be lessons and inspiration for you to live fully alive and how you can become an agent of inclusion, peace and welcome.





SHARING THE MAGIC



BY MUHTAR KENT, CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE COCA-COLA COMPANY

In 1968, Coca-Cola's leaders had the vision and foresight to become a founding partner of Special Olympics when this incredible movement was in its infancy.

Now, nearly 50 years later, we remain committed to helping advance a mission of inclusion and celebration that began with the shining idea of the late, great Eunice Kennedy Shriver.

Personally, I've been part of the Coca-Cola story for almost 40 years, and I'm very proud to have spent so much of my life building our business and our brands. But I've never been more proud

of anything than our work with Special Olympics.

As a movement, Special Olympics broke new ground from the start. And the momentum has only grown in the decades since, as generations of athletes, volunteers and spectators have added their own individual stories to the noble and ennobling tapestry of Special Olympics.

Coca-Cola, as a brand and as a company, has always tried to bring people together, whether gathering around family dinner tables or assembling in great sporting venues. Which is one

reason we've found perfect partners in Special Olympics for nearly half a century.

Special Olympics has made a real and lasting difference in the world as a beacon of hope, acceptance and inclusion. Along the way, this movement has also made a meaningful difference in the individual lives of millions of people who might otherwise have been ignored or excluded.

The Coca-Cola Company and our global system of bottling partners have been improved by our long association with Special Olympics. And my life has been

deeply enriched by the many times I've been privileged to witness these Games, meet with the athletes and even compete alongside them in friendly exhibition matches.





Every other year, when the Special Olympics World Games come along, people in every corner of the globe get a chance to see what it means to overcome great challenges and compete with all the heart, skill, practice and passion of these athletes. And they do so not for fame and fortune but for the simple, unmatched joy of competing.

This year in Austria, the stage will be set again. And the world will witness something remarkable, something valuable and something with the power to change the lives of participants, volunteers and spectators alike.

On behalf of everyone at Coca-Cola, I want you to know that we look forward to these Games and helping, once again, to share the unique magic of Special Olympics with people across Austria and around the world.

We appreciate everything the people of Austria have done to prepare for the Special Olympics World Winter Games, and we wish you all the very best as you host not just a wonderful event but a great and growing movement that's changing lives and celebrating the very best of the human spirit. ✕

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MILESTONES

JUNE 1962

Eunice Kennedy Shriver organises the first summer camp for children and adults with learning difficulties.

JULY 1968

The first Special Olympics are held in Soldier Field Stadium in Chicago, Illinois.

DECEMBER 1971

Special Olympics is recognised by the United States Olympic Committee.

FEBRUARY 1977

The first international Special Olympics Winter Games take place in Colorado.

FEBRUARY 1988

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) officially recognises Special Olympics and allows the Games to use the word „Olympic“ in the title.

MARCH 1993

The 5th Special Olympics World Winter Games are held outside the USA for the first time. Austria is the host country.

JULY 2008

Special Olympics celebrates its 40th birthday with around three million athletes in over 180 countries across the world.

MARCH 2017

The Special Olympics World Winter Games again take place in Austria. This makes Austria the first country apart from the United States to host the Games for the second time.

ABOUT THIS BOOK



BY WALBURGA FRÖHLICH AND KLAUS CANDUSSI

When Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Special Olympics in 1968, it was years before the term inclusion developed. But, if it had already existed, it would have been the perfect description of what the Games are about. We have to change the world so that people can truly live together. It would benefit people with learning difficulties and people without disabilities; and above it would benefit the world as a whole.

Sport proved to be a perfect way to facilitate this. Speaking of Special Olympics in terms of numbers is impressive (see box),

but misses what the event is really about.

Examples of the true milestones of change are the “Host Town Programme”, where athletes live with families in a host country, or the “Healthy Athletes Programme” which is, for many participants, the first time they have access to modern medical care. Or the world of Unified Sports®, where the world is shown how people with different abilities can interact as equals and where the impact is felt in family life. It is here that the Special Olympics truly win gold medals.

And this is why this book is about the idea of the Games and not about metres and seconds. It aims to tell stories of the inclusive spaces that have already been created and of dreams of inclusion that will one day be reality.

Coca-Cola has been a partner of the Olympic Games for almost a century and has supported Special Olympics since the very beginning. We are proud of being a part of this important transformation process.

The idea for this book came about during a conversation with

Thomas Plötzeneder, Lucia Urban, Christiani Wetter, Clemens Brugger and Philipp Bodzenta.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their good ideas to this book.

Walburga Fröhlich and Klaus Candussi founded the social enterprise atempo. They are working to ensure that all people, with and without disabilities, have the same opportunities and rights.

A black and white photograph of a man in a light-colored t-shirt, covering his face with his hands in a gesture of distress or despair. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. A white rectangular box is positioned over the lower part of the image, containing the title text.

A RIGHT TERROR

It just feels good when your t-shirt is a bit tight and doesn't flap around ...

... and not because of a beer belly, but because you have decent muscles. Everyone likes muscles and big upper arms! I do bodybuilding and train my body to the limit, because I want to look good and stay fit.

Earlier, looking good was even more important than it is now, because I used to do a bit of modelling. But the modelling world isn't for me. If you've got a tiny spot, you can't leave the house! I nearly went crazy back then, but then I decided I'd had enough. I just got older and learnt that life has more to offer.

At 15, I didn't want to get out of my wheelchair and practice walking, because I thought that it looked stupid. I'm still annoyed at what I look like when I move and how I sound when I talk. But that's just how things are, I can't change anything. Sometimes I think to myself that it's my trademark and I'm even pleased that I have it. Because people notice me. And that means that I know a lot of people. When I go out, I know all the waiters and their bosses.

Now I'm older, I find it easier to get to know girls. At 16 I was still

much too shy. The girls were too. That's the same with everyone. I just had the wheelchair as well. And the talking.

Being at the gym is like being on holiday. I put my headphones on and switch off. There are bodybuilder motivation videos on youtube and I download the MP3 files. That pushes me when I'm training. But I wouldn't want to do it professionally. You have to eat seven times a day, every day. I wouldn't be able to go to work anymore. →



MARKUS BINDER



MARKUS BINDER IS ...

... is a peer-trainer who works preparing disabled people for the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) exam and is employed at an educational institution.



→


I work training disabled teenagers for the ECDL exams. I can make use of what I learnt from doing sport. Because you need ambition everywhere and staying power. These are things you develop during sport. If someone messes around when they're studying or doesn't want to do anything, I ask them if they don't want a job. That always works. Because they know that I was once exactly where they are now.

When I was in education, I was a right terror. I loathed all of it. But at some point, something changed, from one day to the next. Then all I wanted to do was stay there and study. The trainers say they still don't know what happened.

I think that disabled people should leave the house and not moan that no one speaks to them. I understand that people

are scared of speaking to disabled people, because it's something different. As a disabled person, you have to approach people. Approaching people is also something that you can learn. It's easiest with two beers in you ;-).

When I'm 60, I hope that I have a grandchild on my knee and that I still go to the gym. And, if there's still space, I'll get the name of my grandchild tattooed on my arm. I've already got six tattoos. Hopefully it won't all be hanging at 60. ×



At 15, I didn't want to get out of my wheelchair and practice walking, because I thought that it looked stupid.

FACT

INCLUSION WINS!

At Special Olympics, national flags and country medal statistics are both frowned upon. The focus is on individual winners and on a joint victory: the victory of inclusion.

So if the Games themselves are only beacons of a larger movement, who takes care of anchoring the idea of inclusion in everyday sport away from the publicity of the Olympics?

One of the winners in this discipline is BISI, the educational initiative for sport and inclusion. Over the last ten years, BISI has organised more than 100 inclusive sports events with a competitive or non-competitive character. From small regional events and country-wide inclusive sport days to international football and basketball tournaments – with “unified teams” at least half of the participants are young people with intellectual or physical impairments. In 2016, BISI was awarded the first Austrian Inclusion Prize.

HEINZ TIPPL

BISI Chairman and sports lecturer at the University of Graz

www.inklusionssport.at



**KIRA
GRÜNBERG**

Track athlete and author

To me, inclusion means interacting with each other on an everyday basis, mutual respect and supporting the wishes of others. It means everyone being allowed to live according to their values within a functioning society.



**RUDOLF
HUNDSTORFER**

Politician

Inclusion can succeed when we are all prepared to get actively involved so that existing barriers can be removed. Active involvement is more important than ever.

WHAT SPORT CAN TEACH YOU ABOUT LIFE



BY BARBARA GÖDL-PURRER

Special Olympics – Unified Sports® – Basketball – I’m sitting in the crowd, watching the game. “Healthy” competitive athletes are playing in a team with Special Olympics athletes – players with mental impairments. The game progresses quickly. There is total concentration – players with impairments find a free space – are passed to – shoot; their “healthy” teammates watch carefully – plan moves –

encourage the “disabled” players to take the ball – to pass the ball – shoot – miss – score – as is so often the case with people with mental impairments, their delight at every goal is immediate, infectious; their enthusiasm is catching and comes from the heart.

My first thought is: It must be great for people with learning difficulties to play in a team with successful athletes!

My second thought is: And what about the “healthy” players – do they have to make sacrifices for inclusion in team sports? Do they learn things that they can use when they play “normal” competitive sport?

When speaking to the trainer, the answer is clear: “My players profit enormously from ‘unified’ training and the competitions – I never would have expected it!” I also find out that the play-

ers learn to watch their disabled teammates carefully to find out who is not only free but is also ready to take the ball. They determine the exact potential and athletic skills of the “unified” players, which means that they can make good tactical use of them and involve them in the game. They learn to show consideration when playing. They experience full, shared joy at every success as well as fairness when dealing with mistakes and missed moves. In short – they refine their skills in observing and perceiving teammates and opponents, learning to react quickly to gameplay and individual dispositions. They learn to fully involve themselves in the game, while still taking the entire team

*Being able
to listen,
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recognise
and react is
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along with
others.*

into account. Play unified – they take this with them when they play with competitive teams, and this improves the way they play with “healthy” colleagues.

This makes me think. Perceiving and recognising information from your own body and the environment is necessary for moving and acting in a skilled and focussed manner. Perception makes us capable of reacting so that we can adapt our actions to individual and environmental situations – enabling us to act in a competent manner. Being able to listen, watch, recognise and react is also a requirement for getting along with others in both relationships and teams. It allows people to develop as indi-



**BARBARA
MUHR**

Chairwoman
Holding Graz

I am passionate about inclusion, because I wish to live in a diverse society, which provides an environment where people can blossom, can develop further and are not limited by stereotypes. This is why I approach people openly, whichever culture they belong to or whatever their physical and mental capacities are.

WHAT DOES OLYMPIC MEAN?

“Faster, higher, stronger,” has been the famous motto of the modern Olympic Games since 1896. This does not really reveal any differences to other competitions.

So what makes these games so unique? The myth of the Olympic Games originates from the ancient Olympic Games, which were to “gather together the youth of the world” every four years.

But this announcement was not to be taken literally then and is still not the case today: initially, women were not included in this youth of the world and they were not permitted to participate until the 1900 Olympic Games in Paris. In 1948, Olympic Games for sportswomen and sportsmen with physical handicaps were organised for the first time. Now, these “Paralympics” usually take place around three weeks after the “regular” Games.

“Special Olympics”, games for people with learning difficulties, have been organised since 1968 and have been officially part of the Olympic family since 1971.

A unification of all three Olympic Games to form the “Olympic Games for all” still remains a dream.



ROBERT KASPAR

Special project /
Special Events Special
Olympics 2017

I am passionate about inclusion, because my personal dream is for my daughter Leonie with her Down syndrome to be able to enjoy equal opportunities and a fulfilled life in society and for her sporting, personal and professional activities to be appreciated within a diverse society.



viduals and as part of a team, influencing relationship and team skills.

Encouraging the development of perception and reaction skills as well as the ability to appreciate team achievements and individual successes seems to be important in many areas of life: it is a recipe for success in social interaction. Suddenly, I realise how much everyone can learn from the inclusion of people with (mental) impairments. Not just in sport, but in many areas of life. Live unified – this is a win-win situation and not a one way street of self-sacrifice. Unified Sports® shows us that. It is very likely that we could learn something that would benefit us, our relationships and our social groups. Looking at “inclusion” from this perspective could be very “healthy”. ✕



BARBARA GÖDL-PURRER

Barbara Gödl-Purrer took part in competitive swimming as a teenager. She lectures physiotherapy at FH Joanneum University of Applied Sciences and directs the “Healthy Athletes Program” of Special Olympics.

WHAT SPORT CAN TEACH YOU ABOUT LIFE

Easy to read summary



In America, sportspeople with learning difficulties play basketball together with sportspeople without disabilities. And everyone benefits. Barbara Gödl-Purrer reports on the sport.

I'm sitting in the crowd and watching the basketball game. Sportspeople with learning difficulties are playing with team members without disabilities. All are concentrating on the game. When players with learning difficulties are free, they receive the ball and shoot. You can see how truly happy they are when the ball goes in the hoop. Their team members without disabilities watch carefully. My first thought is: It must be great for people with learning

difficulties to play in a team with successful athletes!

My second thought is: But what about the players without disabilities? Do they have to make sacrifices, because they are playing with teammates who have learning difficulties? Or do the team members without disabilities benefit, too?

Their trainer tells me: The sportspeople without disabilities benefit greatly from team training. They learn to carefully observe other players.

There is a difference between a player being free and being ready for the ball. Team members without disabilities need to be able to recognise the differ-

ence. During the game, they need to be considerate of the players who have disabilities. They learn how to react quickly to what they see. This means that they also play better with players who don't have a disability.

The game makes me think about everyday life. There might be a lot that we could learn from this, which would benefit both us as individuals and our relationships.



**TONI
INNAUER**

Olympic champion,
author, lecturer

Inclusion can succeed when the prerequisites exist, like when we live together with our "Down syndrome" sister Anna. We other four siblings have increasingly learnt to appreciate how our Anna enriches our lives – also in our parents' company.



A SE- ARATE GROUP

Work

I work in a rehabilitation centre. I work as a cleaner, from Monday to Friday.

I get up at half past four every day and get ready for work. I get a sandwich and some water ready the evening before. Then I sort out the tablets I need for my epilepsy. We meet at the main train station at six o'clock.



JESSICA LEX

I need 20 minutes to get to the station from where I live. The train leaves at 06:11 and arrives just after half past. Then there's a bit of a walk until we get to the building. Then we go and get changed, because there's a uniform. At seven we start work.

My work colleagues travel in with me every day. They work there too, with me. There are seven of us and two work attendants. We have various tasks: doing the

quiet rooms, sorting out the patients' glasses, waiting on duties, clearing up and cleaning the underground garage, washing and drying the laundry.

The rooms in the rehabilitation centre are done by other people, they're employed there. They are a separate group. We do say good morning to each other and generally we can ask them questions, but we don't work together. We are a separate team.

At 11:15 we go for lunch. The therapists also eat with us. But they are separate. We don't really talk to them at lunch, but we do talk to each other. Lunch break finishes at 12 midday.

Then we check the tea bars, see if there is enough tea, if everything is clean. We check the quiet rooms too. We also get welcome bags ready for the new patients, sorting out pieces of paper and putting them in the bags. →



JESSICA LEX IS ...

... a cleaner working for an institution for the integration of disabled people in the world of work.




→

I don't really have anything to do with the boss of the rehabilitation centre, I don't even know his name. My bosses are the work attendants and the managerial staff where we are. I don't know if there is a workers' council. If I have problems, I can talk to my boss.

At quarter to one, we change out of our uniform and take the train back. I'm home again at half past two. Then I have a shower and do housework. Do the washing, clear up, the usual stuff. I do everything myself. My home help comes on Tuesday and Wednesday and she cooks with me. On Thursday, my leisure-time help comes, I go shopping with her, do things like that.

I trained as a basket and furniture weaver, then I was unemployed for half a year. I started working as a cleaner on the 29th of October 2013. I get pocket money for my work and tip money. We get a wage slip, where you see what is pocket money and what I get as a tip. Holiday days are listed as well.

I don't want to talk about the money that I get or what I do with it. I don't really like talking about my work in general. When I go home to my parents and people ask me, I don't tell them much because it's my own business. But I'm satisfied. ×



*I get pocket
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my work
and tip
money.*

FACT

AUSTRIA STAYS “EXCLUSIVE”

Austria’s social laws exclude more than 25,000 people from the employment market. They are labelled as “unfit to work” and do not have social insurance like everyone else. But the dividing line is vague and arbitrary: 50 percent of the work of a non-disabled person; the assessment is undertaken according to an outdated medical model of disability.

Originally created to protect people, it is now a barrier for those who want to work to support themselves. While other European countries have removed such hurdles, this adjustment of social security law has still not even been seriously discussed, although eight years have passed since Austria ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

FRANZ WOLFMAYR

Senior Advisor

European Association of Service
Providers for Persons with
Disabilities



MICHAEL
LANDAU

President of Caritas Austria

To me, inclusion means saying yes to the positive potential of differences, in a time, where being different raises suspicions.



FRANZ
KÜBERL

Former President
of Caritas Austria

I believe that inclusion means opening up paths so that each person with their skills and talents can arrive at the centre of society.

COMPANIES CREATE SPACES FOR INCLUSION



BY HEIDEMARIE EGGER AND GREGOR DEMBLIN

Many companies still make the mistake of underestimating people with disabilities. But they could go from slowing down inclusion to facilitating it. They just need the right support.

This realisation, prompted by frustrating personal experiences, was the reason behind the founding of two successful companies – consulting firm DisAbility Performance and online job platform Career Moves, which

currently advertises around 1000 positions stating “applications from people with disabilities are very welcome”.

However, figures show a contradictory picture. They reveal a positive attitude on the part of companies. But the number of companies that do not meet employment requirements and instead pay compensation is high.

Some companies are open to the topic. In Vienna, there are al-

ready five disability managers in large companies, whose main task is to deal strategically with the topic of “disability as an economic factor”. And the economic forum DisAbility is a newly founded company network with the aim of developing knowledge, which already has eight member companies.

However, there is still a long way to go until inclusion at work is no longer a dream, but a reality. People with learning difficul-

ties still have a particularly difficult time when looking for work. Deep-rooted fears and prejudices turn into psychological barriers and it is often easier to give in to these fears than to approach the topic openly and accept that the facts disprove the prejudices. Companies with practical experience as an inclusive employer report greater loyalty and motivation as well as positive effects on the entire atmosphere at work. By being flexible and open, these companies profit from inclusion.

A VISION OF AN INCLUSIVE WORKING WORLD

For the working world to be an inclusive space in the future, psychological barriers still need to be removed and new frame conditions need to be created. Work requirements and support measures should encourage individual strengths. And people with learning difficulties need to be provided with personal assistance. What results is diversity. Diver-



85 %

of companies asked stated that people with disabilities do good work.

47,5 %

see people with disabilities as having great potential for the world of work.

50 %

of companies want to be perceived as an attractive employer for people with disabilities.

78 %

of companies do not meet employment requirements.

(Sources: Chancen-Barometer 2015; Geschäftsbericht Sozialministeriumservice 2015)



**HORST
PIRKER**

Managing Director
of Verlagsgruppe News
Publishing Group

We are incredibly lucky that people are so different. Being aware of how lucky we are that these differences exist and dealing with them carefully shows that a society is, in the positive sense of the word, “developed”.

Being different also (and in particular) includes special needs, which we all have, even if they are not the same. In this sense, we all need the idea of inclusion, need other people to accept us with our particular needs, whether these are obvious or hidden, temporary or permanent.



**MARLIES
BAURECHT**

Director of Seed Financing, Austria
Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft mbH

To me, inclusion means recognizing strengths instead of supposed weaknesses. Social entrepreneurs such as Specialisterne, Vollpension or atempo show that it is possible! The aws Social Business Initiative aims to provide social entrepreneurs with support and encouragement in this area.



**HERMANN
HOCH**

Architect, music producer
and singer

Inclusion can succeed when concerns fade away. Inclusion can succeed when individuals are prepared to take that first step.

FACT

WORK AND DISABILITY

According to the last national report on the situation of disabled persons in Austria from 2008, the proportion of disabled people between 20 and 64 years of age is around 16 percent. But only 5.2 percent of all adults with a regular paid job have a disability.



Proportion of disabled people in Austria: 16%



Proportion of disabled people with paid work in Austria: 5.2%



CHRISTIAN HORAK

Contrast Ernst & Young Management Consulting GmbH

To me, inclusion means that all people in a society can live a self-determined, active life, observing commonly defined rules, without reducing others' chances of participating.



sity is demanded by many sides, but mainly in terms of all other dimensions of diversity – such as gender, religion and sexual orientation. Disability is a topic that is usually left out. An inclusive working world creates jobs based on individual strengths and with ideal frame conditions. One example is the software enterprise SAO, which wants one percent of its positions to be held by staff members with disabilities by 2020. When people are different, for example, because they are on the autism spectrum, they have a specific way of perceiving situations and thinking – this in particular is seen as holding potential.

This development is therefore good for everyone and an inclusive working world becomes an ideal place for all employees. ✕

Specialist contribution



HEIDEMARIE EGGER

studied communication studies and journalism. In 2016, she took over the DisAbility Talent Programme, where she supports students with disabilities in finding a career.



GREGOR DEMBLIN

has used a wheelchair since his swimming accident. He studied philosophy and cofounded the inclusive job platform Career Moves as well as the consultancy firm DisAbility Performance.

COMPANIES CREATE SPACES FOR INCLUSION

Easy to read summary



People with disabilities have a right to work. But it is difficult for them to get a job.

There are few companies willing to employ people with disabilities.

Gregor Demblin had a swimming accident. Since then, he has used a wheelchair. He wanted to return to work in his wheelchair, but could not find employment. So he founded an online job agency for people with disabilities. He also provides consulting services for companies who want to employ people with disabilities.

At the moment there is a contradiction: Many companies say that people with disabilities

are good workers. But very few companies employ people with disabilities.

Some large companies have recognised that they can benefit from employing people with disabilities. These companies recognise the strengths of people with disabilities in the workplace. A good example is the company SAP. This company manufactures computer programmes. By 2020, it aims for one percent of positions to be made available for people with disabilities. SAP believes that people with autism can perform specific tasks particularly well.

But things are still very difficult for people with learning difficulties. There are very few compa-

nies willing to give people with learning difficulties a chance



**CHRISTOPH
BADELT**

Economist

To me, inclusion is when people notice each other and take each other seriously, however different they are. In terms of their personality, their wishes, skills, boundaries, dreams and fears. And, taking these aspects into account, they shape a life together – in private, at work and in society.



**I'M NOT
STUPID**

Training

“Special school – idiot school” is what the children in my neighbourhood used to say. “He spends all day learning nothing.”

I could write a book about my time at school. There wouldn’t be anything nice in it.

My only positive experience was during the cycling exam. Us children from the special school did the exam together with the primary school children. We all failed the first exam. But the second time we passed. I did too!

After the special school, I was at home for a whole year. I really wanted to become a carpenter, but someone told me I should train as a decorator. So I did an apprenticeship in decorating.

Then I worked at a decorating company for one year and three months. That was not a great time. On the building site, my colleagues always messed around. They had alcohol with them and said: “Don’t you dare to drink” and things like that. Over time, my problems got worse. Finally, the boss threw me out.

In the next company, I didn’t survive the first day. When the boss realised that I only had a

semi-skilled level apprenticeship, he told me I didn’t need to bother coming back.

And that’s how things carried on, until I trained for my current job. At the beginning it was really hard, having to sit and learn again. The reading wasn’t easy. I can read, but when I’m stressed, I confuse everything and don’t understand what I’m reading anymore. Then I don’t understand the exam questions.

But since then, I’ve passed several exams. The fishing exam, for example. I spent two years learning for it, but I really wanted to pass. I told them, “I need something easy to learn, I have learning difficulties”, and I found something online. →

A black and white portrait of Klaus Tomaschek, a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a dark sweater over a collared shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

KLAUS TOMASCHEK

KLAUS TOMASCHEK IS ...

... an evaluator for the quality of institutions for disabled people and is employed by Land Steiermark.



→

I passed the fire safety exam too. The fire safety exam was my bosses' idea. They saw that I was interested in fire safety and always stayed calm when my work colleague had an epileptic fit. They asked me if I wanted to take part in fire safety training together with a colleague. At the exam, I got confused reading the questions. Even though I knew everything. Then my colleague read the exam questions and I told him what to mark with a cross. That was how I passed the exam.

Now, I'm 40. I think I needed more time and support. I'm not stupid, I can learn things. I'd like to travel to a conference or something again. But at the moment I think it's more important that I learn more about having a good relationship. That's also part of life.

To me, dreams of inclusion are something for the future. If inclusion really had existed when I was younger, I might be different now, more normal, maybe married. I would have gone to a normal school and I definitely would have become a carpenter.

I wouldn't want to work as a decorator again. I'd never find a job or a boss like mine again. If my boss said: "Right, Klaus, if you want to keep this job, you have to spend 3 years studying again," then I'd say: "Oh, shit," because I hate swotting, but I'd do it. ×

*If inclusion really
had existed when
I was younger,
I might be
different
now ...*





**MONIKA
LANGTHALER**

Managing Partner of brainbows –
the information company

To me, inclusion means understanding that it is normal for people to be different and giving all people the basic right to participate in society, using their imagination, enjoying experimenting – simply getting along together!



**HERMANN
METZLER**

ZM3

Immobilien-gesellschaft mbH

To me, inclusion means more than just integration. Inclusion is a social task leading towards mutual acceptance.

THE DREAMS WE DREAM.



BY ELISABETH TSCHANN

If you ask young people with disabilities what their dreams are, these dreams are always different, as is the case with all people. They do not differ due to their disabilities, but simply because dreams are something very personal, something which can hardly be manipulated.

Of course there are parents and teachers who picture something specific for a young person, a career, an educational goal, a type of life – but this is just something they picture, not something they dream of.

During my work, I often ask about lifetime dreams, because this is a good way to find out what someone would like to do, what they think about, what energises them, what they like, how they want to live.

When on the hunt for possibilities for the future, all discussions include an image of an inclusive world – there have been no exceptions. The world of special systems can only be a transitional world. It is never something that is dreamt of.

But what happens when we see “inclusive lifetime dreams” as a

mission to create a society where no one is excluded, where diversity and heterogeneity are seen as the basis for a successful life together? We are then called to radically adapt our actions so that participation in all areas of life – in all areas of activity, with different stakeholders in different forms – becomes possible.

Vorarlberg is working to create and support opportunities for participation through the commitment shown by their equality law, the orientation of programmes and the use of funding. But just as it is not possible to share human dignity, it is not

possible to delegate responsibility for the development of society. Responsibility needs to become a reality in all areas of life.

Numerous possibilities have opened up at school, in professional training, in the world of work and during leisure activities so that people with disabilities can live in the same world as everyone else. Initiatives, associations and self-help groups have achieved a great deal, raising awareness and laying the groundwork for the future. But it is still very much about the individual. Every person is turned into a “case”, who needs to be

*I dream of an
inclusive
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...

encouraged, educated and integrated. We need to create truly inclusive living spaces so that everyone can live as part of society.

I dream of an inclusive society, a world with space for everyone, where each person can show themselves and be seen – of a society that recognises their talents and supports their needs. A society founded on solidarity, based on shared values, where no one leads a parallel life and no one is left out! In Vorarlberg we have a saying, which can be roughly translated as “work, work, build a house”.



**EDITH
LITTICH**

Vice Rector for Teaching and Students
University of Economics
and Business Vienna

*To me, inclusion is when
interacting with people from different
environments is seen
as enriching. In terms of
inclusion, universities are
central because they are places
where social participation is not just
a buzzword, but where it is lived by
and recognised as a value in itself.*



**MANFRED
PACHERNEGG**

Director of
Energienetze Steiermark GmbH

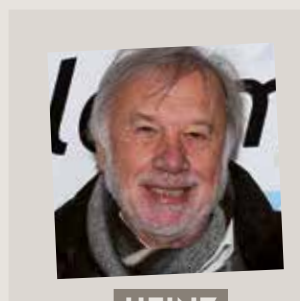
*Inclusion can succeed through
events like the Special Olympics,
which remove barriers to people
with special skills.*

FACT

PEOPLE FIRST – MENSCH ZUERST

The first People First groups developed in the USA – in Austria and Germany they are often also called “Mensch-zuerst-Gruppen”.

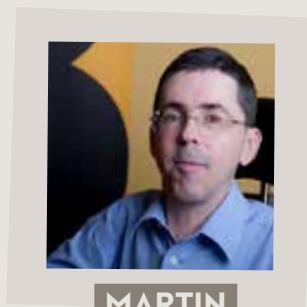
A central demand of this self-advocacy movement is “don’t call us mentally disabled”. As their name clearly states, they first want to be seen as people, like everyone else. They call for the term “people with learning difficulties” to be used in situations where it is necessary to put a name to the group. This description clarifies where their limitations are, without creating an irrevocable separation from all other people. Because the term learning difficulties also shows that they can learn. It may be difficult and may take longer, but they can learn.



HEINZ
TIPPL

Chairman of BISI,
the educational initiative for
sport and inclusion

*I believe that inclusion is
the only way to ensure that
humanity survives. Exclusion
means singling out, war and
destruction, as current exam-
ples show us every day.*



MARTIN
LADSTÄTTER

Founding Member and Chairman
of BIZEPS, the first Austrian
Centre for Autonomous Living

*Inclusion can succeed when we
don't stop fighting and con-
tinue to demand our right to
inclusion in all areas of life.*



This is what I think of when I see the title “Inclusion – Creating Spaces, Living Dreams”. Building and designing our own living space is an important aspect of our existence, of our dreams and life plans – it is part of our reality and our identity. According to German psychologist Hilarion Petzold, body, social networks as well as work and achievement are important pillars of identity. During sport, physical prowess and social gatherings are combined. Sport is part of the identity of all athletes, of their living spaces and life’s dreams. Sport and movement become a shared activity that leaves no one out, part of the living space we have designed for ourselves. A famous quote from the history of the Olympic Games is “The important thing is not winning, but taking part”. To live by this phrase means enabling complete participation by people with disabilities – so that a dream turns into a real inclusive living space. This does not only apply to sport, but also to professional training and the world of work. ✕

Specialist contribution



ELISABETH TSCHANN

is head of the department for
integration support at the Vorarl-
berg State Government. She is a
teacher and expert for integrative
life design and participation.

THE DREAMS WE DREAM.

Easy to read summary

Elisabeth Tschann works at the Vorarlberg State Government and says:

People with learning difficulties need to be able to learn together with everybody else.

At work, I often search for good educational opportunities for people with learning difficulties. I have often talked to them about this topic. Every time, I realise that all these people dream of living and learning together with everyone else. People with learning difficulties do not dream of living and working in a special world, separated from all other people. This means that special provisions for disabled people are only good as a transition to a shared

world. I start with the question of what people expect from life and what their dreams are. This enables us to find out what someone likes to do. We see what type of work the person enjoys. And enjoying what you do means you work with more enthusiasm.

But unfortunately we often see people with learning difficulties as a “case”. We believe that the main thing to do is to work on these people. That we need to encourage and educate them. But we also need to ensure that the right place exists for every person with learning difficulties. Life in our society must be the same for everyone.

I dream of a society where everyone has a place. Where all skills are used. And where exactly the right support is provided.



Leicht Lesen



MARTIN
OHNEBERG

President of IV-Vorarlberg

In my opinion, the whole of society is responsible for inclusion; this task can only succeed when we live together in solidarity. Voluntary interaction at work highlights the importance of regular work for all people and helps to break taboos and take away fears.



BERTRAM
JÄGER

Politician

Inclusion can succeed when ... I'll say it with the words of Eugen Roth, which can roughly be translated as follows: "A human often feels transformed, when treated with humanity."



**MY LIFE
IS GOOD
HOW IT IS**

On a normal day I get up early, wake my son, have breakfast, dress him and take him to kindergarten. Nicolas has always liked kindergarten – he says goodbye, then he's off.

Then I go shopping, do the housework and cook. In the afternoon, we often go to the park or play together at home or go swimming. I like swimming and Nicolas does too. Jonny, his dad, comes every day and plays with the little one or works on his model cars. Nicolas watches him. He's mad about cars, just like his dad. Jonny and I weren't together for long before I got pregnant. But I didn't realise it. My carer told me I might be pregnant. Then we went to the gynaecologist and he confirmed it. I was already seven months pregnant.

It was a shock. The first thing Jonny did was go for a smoke. I thought a lot.

And then we went shopping, because we didn't have a lot of time left. Baby clothes, bed, pram, baby changing unit.

The birth didn't take long. I got up in the morning and told Jonny to call the ambulance. He had a coffee and got dressed first, and when the ambulance arrived, my contractions were already every two minutes. Jonny was very calm during the birth and took a photo of us as soon as everything was over.

Through Nicolas, I've got to know other parents at kindergarten. I can talk to them about anything. A woman I went to school with also has children and she often comes to the park with us. My cousins have children too. →



TANJA VOITH



TANJA VOITH IS ...

... a stay-at-home mum and looks after her three year old son, who lives with her. Specialists support her in looking after her child and in organising her life.



→

I hope that Nicolas goes to school and learns something. I'll help him with reading and writing and religion. Because he should learn something about religion too. If he wants to be a fireman or a policeman one day, that's fine with me. He can try things out. "What I don't want him to become," says Jonny, "is a priest."

Two people come once a week. To talk. I can ask them things if I have questions and we play with Nicolas or listen to him. It'll be a while until I don't need any carers. For doctors' appointments, when I have questions, when I'm not sure about something. The first people I go to are my carers.

Nicolas is great. He helps with the housework, clears away his mug and plate himself. His favourite book is "Heidi". I read it to him. When he's 18, I don't think he'll need me anymore.

At the beginning, people asked me if I wanted to give Nicolas to foster parents. But I said no straight away. My life is good how it is. I just sometimes don't know what else I should do at home and I miss talking to my work colleagues. If I found a job, then life would be perfect. ×

*When Nicolas
goes off the
deep end,
he's just like
Jonny.
I leave him
to it.*





JUDITH
PÜHRINGER

Manager at arbeit plus –
Soziale Unternehmen Österreich

In my opinion, inclusion exists in a society where each individual has the same opportunities for self-actualisation and can participate in life, learning, playing and working. And in a job market, where all people have the chance to contribute their talents and skills. – A beautiful picture that is worth working for.



ANDREAS
SALCHER

Andreas Salcher Projects

To me, inclusion simply means paying more attention to all pupils – particularly those who are a bit different.

FREEDOM TO LOVE!



BY BARBARA PRIETL

THOUGHTS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY AND INCLUSION.

I imagine if the people of 2016 didn't have any visions. Imagine if nobody had any ideas of how life could be in the future or how people who need help could be given support.

Then picture a young woman with Down syndrome – let's call her Carina – and think about the year 2030. What would Carina's life be like in 2030 if things remained as they are in 2016?

Carina may currently have many dedicated helpers who ask about

her wishes and needs. But it is difficult to move away from your parents and built an independent life if, like Carina, you are reliant on regular help. A beauty ideal based on a perfect appearance and fitness makes it difficult to develop a positive body image. If Carina and her boyfriend Thomas, who has a learning disability and is in a wheelchair, want to have a child, they would need constant support to allow him or her to grow up with them. In 2016, this type of support is barely available in Austria. And in 2030?

Things will be very different. Think back to the 1960s and 1970s. Both science and society believed that people with learning disabilities were children in adults' bodies. Nobody seriously thought that people with disabilities have the same needs as the rest of society: that they fall in love, want to have sex and relationships. That was inconceivable then.

Happily, most of the prejudices of the 60s and 70s no longer exist. Which prejudices from 2016 do we still need to overcome so that

people like Carina and Thomas can live a fulfilled and self-determined life in 2030?

First of all, we have to hope that the authorities of 2016 do not just maintain the status quo. We hope that they try out new options. Listen even more carefully to those affected. Do not see dreams as unrealistic. While at the same time fighting for the social budget to be maintained. When you think of Carina and Thomas and all the other people with disabilities, wouldn't it be a shame for things to stay as

*In 2030,
people with
and without
disabilities will
want a life
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autonomy, equal
chances and a
good quality
of life.*

they are now, for there to be no visions for 2030? What could life be like for Carina and Thomas in the future?

We can assume that, in 2030, people – with and without disabilities – will want the same things as people have always wanted. They will want to love and be loved, to belong, to feel secure, take on responsibilities, create the life they want and receive the help that they need. Nothing spectacular, but a life shaped by autonomy, equal chances and a good quality of life.



**HERBERT
RÜDISSER**

Foundation Board
Special Olympics Liechtenstein

Inclusion can succeed when we give all people, with and without impairments, a chance to blossom and to lead a fulfilling life. Difference and diversity of peoples' skills enrich our lives. We need to have the courage and the willingness to accept this gift.



**ROBERT
STURN**

Chairman of Vorarlberger
Landes-Versicherung V.a.G.

Inclusion can start once we open our hearts to all people.

BECOMING A PARENT ISN'T DIFFICULT ...

... being a mum or dad is something else. Many young adults need help so that they can carry out their new role as parents well. This also applies to parents with learning difficulties. The European Community Project "Parents with intellectual disability" finds and describes best practice examples of support. They are particularly numerous in England. The "Disabled Parents Network" provides support specifically for couples with disabilities, covering all parenting stages. The organisation "Best Beginnings" developed a "Baby Buddy App" with easy to understand information and an emergency service. The organisation "Change" in Leeds provides special training sessions for professionals on supporting parents with learning difficulties.




**LAURA
SALOMON**

People First / Vorarlberg

Inclusion can succeed when everyone can decide for themselves how they want to live. There is no need to be afraid of us people with learning difficulties. People need to dare to live with us. We people with learning difficulties enrich society. I wish for people not to push us away.



Carina and Thomas from the year 2030 could be confident young people, who receive the help they really need – no more, but also no less. With no one telling them “you won’t manage it”, before it has even been tried. Respecting individual needs and privacy would come as a matter of course. Carina and Thomas would be able to live together if they wanted to, but also easily separate again. And the sexuality of people with disabilities would no longer be a taboo. Carina and Thomas could – if they wanted to and were ready to take on the responsibility – have children and receive the support they need. They would have a secure income and would be part of a society that appreciates and makes use of their strengths.

So it is a good thing that most people in 2016 do have visions and creative ideas. And that they work to implement these ideas and think about how the lives of people with disabilities could be improved. 



BARBARA PRIETL

works at Lebenshilfe. She organises and leads “Selbstbestimmt Lieben” (freedom to love) workshops for people with disabilities.

FREEDOM TO LOVE

Easy to read summary

Barbara Prietl dreams of all people being able to live in our society enjoying equal rights. Of no one being excluded. Barbara Prietl imagines what life will be like for Carina and Thomas, two young people with learning difficulties, in 15 years:

The dream of inclusion

Carina and Thomas can try out everything. No one will tell them beforehand “you won’t manage it anyway”. This applies to all areas of their life. Including their private life of course.

Carina and Thomas can live together if they want to. But they can also separate without difficulties. Just like all couples can.

Ms Prietl also imagines that it will be entirely normal that people with disabilities have sex. Carina and Thomas can, of course, also have children together if they wish to and if they take responsibility for them. Some parents need more support, others need less. Carina and Thomas receive the support they need.

Carina and Thomas will have learnt a trade and will have a secure income. This means that they can take care of their family. They are part of our society. Our society appreciates their strengths and makes use of them.



Leicht Lesen



**GABRIELE
NUSSBAUMER**

Vice President
of Vorarlberg Parliament

I am passionate about integration because it is only in an inclusive society that every person is accepted for who they are, with heart, mind and soul. Some need more support in life, others less, and a fair exchange of different talents and interests develops.



**THOMAS
PLÖTZENER**

GEHRER PLÖTZENER DDWS
Corporate Advisors GmbH

I am passionate about inclusion because it always teaches me something new.

**“GOOD
ENOUGH”
IS NOT
ENOUGH**



A while ago, I met Tim Shriver and told him that I have a daughter with Down syndrome. “Oh great,” he said enthusiastically, “congratulations!” This is the attitude I want for my daughter Teresa. Because she is a joy. She isn’t “wonderful, but”, just wonderful.

I am a single mother of two daughters and want both of them to achieve as much as possible in their lives. I don’t want to already limit my daughters by the choice of school. People say that a comprehensive school is good enough for children with Down syndrome. Well not for me!

Teresa should be able to go to the same school as her older sister Rebecca. I asked about a place two and a half years before she would need to start. After all, the school needs to organise resources and prepare for inclusion.

But while Rebecca was welcomed to the grammar school with open arms, I received a polite refusal for Teresa.

As a mother, I look for the school that I believe will suit my child best. But even here there are differences. With Rebecca, no one questioned my decision. With Teresa, everyone asked if that re-

ally was the best school for her. Just because the school that I chose for her didn’t want to accept her.

There are many good reasons for my decision. Some are very practical: no different school holidays, the same short journey to school for both children. I want my daughter to go to a school where she meets her classmates in the supermarket and in the park. Where you can walk to each other’s homes and not have a three quarter of an hour drive through the city, just because you have Down syndrome. →



FAMILY RAUSCH





MAGGIE RAUSCH IS ...

... a mother of two daughters, the youngest of whom has Down syndrome. She grew up in Tyrol, lived in the USA for seven years, where her second daughter was born, and has been back in Austria since 2012.

→

When I chose a school for Teresa, the important thing for me was equality. And I know that we need trailblazers. If other parents hadn't got involved, my child would now be travelling by bus to some suburb, to the one school where all children are bundled together who don't comply with what is seen to be normal.

The University of Vienna is on my list for later. Someone has to try. I will let them know in plenty of time that Teresa is coming so that they can prepare, too. We know that it is possible! In Spain, in America, in Argentina; everywhere there are examples of degree programmes for people with a so-called intellectual impairment. And so I believe that Austria can do it too. The University of Vienna, one of the oldest universities, can as well.



It's not going to be a physics degree, but the Nobel Peace Prize would definitely be achievable for Teresa with her totally open mind and her infectious enthusiasm. If she makes a different decision, if she dyes her hair green when she has finished school and cleans toilets, that's okay, too. As a mother, I can't allow that to bother me. But I want to provide her with an education, which ensures that all doors remain open to her.

×

*... but the
Nobel Peace
Prize would
definitely be
achievable
for Teresa.*





**THOMAS
WENDEL**

Medicine

I am passionate about inclusion, because it enriches me personally and helps me to grow as a person.



**DANIELA
GRABHER**

People First / Vorarlberg

To me, inclusion means that everyone has the same opportunities on the job market and that no one is left out. We all live in one society. No one should be outside of it. Every individual should experience equal opportunities.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



BY GERMAIN WEBER

Education is of central importance for equal opportunities and for living a self-determined life. Good education usually goes hand in hand with social and professional participation. And this, in turn, leads to diversity being dealt with in a competent and respectful manner.

We organise education in our schools. Traditionally, we use different types of schools for different children of the same age. Special schools are usually for children who show difficulties in learning skills expected

at schools. All other children are taught according to one curriculum, with the assumption that these children have a similar capability for learning the subject matter. When this turns out not to be the case, we give individual children more time, let them repeat a year or allow them to swap to another school, often a special school. Such selections have a formative effect.

Children at a special school learn early that they have to live with their own lack of skills and experience no contact with non-disabled children of the same age.

In turn, non-disabled children do not get to know children with learning disabilities, because they do not attend their school. The questionable assumption that pupils at a regular school represent a homogenous group of learners means that regular schools lead to a further increase in so-called risk pupils. Without doubt, there are many children who successfully attain qualifications in this highly differentiating and segregating school system. But the system also causes many young people to lose out in terms of education.

Those who are sent to a special school are usually prepared for a career in a sheltered workshop and have no chance of gaining regular employment. This sort of education structure causes significant disadvantages for many young people; disadvantages that need to be compensated by financial support from the state and other sources over a period of decades. Can we change something to benefit individuals and society as a whole?

There is a great deal to be said for systematically introducing “a school for all”, an inclusive school that offers an education system where children with and without impairments, gifted and talented children, and children with learning disabilities learn

*There are
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with diversity
and
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long-term
contribution to
social cohesion.*

together. Many areas have practical experience of a successful transformation towards an inclusive education system with an appropriate structure and adequate resources. There are also impressive empirical reports revealing the positive impacts of an inclusive school.

In South Tyrol, the traditional school system was restructured in the 1980s to create an integrative school system, with an inclusive school for the first eight school years. In North and East Tyrol, children are typically taught in traditional regular schools. When their PISA test “learning outcomes” are compared with those of the children in South Tyrol, the results of these two areas are in part sig-



**FRANK
HENSEL**

Chairman of REWE International AG

Inclusion can succeed when we show consideration for each other. Developing confidence – in terms of yourself and others – can easily achieve a great deal. When we work together to increase their social status, inclusion is easy.



**GEORG
STARHEMBERG**

Entrepreneur

Inclusion can succeed when connecting the stronger with the weaker is implemented as a requirement for a solid community.

SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION AND DEGREE WITH DOWN SYNDROME?

Pablo Pineda is Spanish, 42 years old, has completed a degree in pedagogical psychology and works as a teacher and actor. Pablo Pineda is a man with Down syndrome.

Silvia Barbarotto, 20 years old, completed her school leaving examination at Istituto Virgilio in Milan with the highest possible score of 100 points. She has Down syndrome too.

Karen Gaffney, 39 years old, also has Down syndrome and holds a degree. In addition, the University of Portland has awarded her with an honorary doctorate.

In Austria, very few young people with learning difficulties attend a school where it is possible to take school leaving examinations. According to Austria's 2015 National Education Report, 2.4% of all pupils have special educational needs and are taught inclusively, meaning in regular schools. But although this group of people represents 4.6% of pupils in comprehensive schools and new secondary schools, this proportion is (statistically speaking) 0.0% in academic secondary schools. Out of a total of 130,000 pupils, only 20 have special educational needs. This in itself means that degrees will continue to remain a rarity.



PHILIPP
HANSA

ORF presenter

To me, inclusion means openness. To all people, all ideas, all opinions, however different they may be. When this succeeds, we can approach each other as equals, as friends and not as strangers, in a society that is currently tending to pull us apart.



nificantly worse. Furthermore, in North and East Tyrol, the proportion of risk pupils is 31%, whereas in South Tyrol it is 15.9%.

A central characteristic of inclusive education is an individual curriculum and development plan, created with and for every individual pupil, which is connected with individualised teaching. Teachers make use of inclusive learning practices and team teaching. Specialists from related professions are available for specific situations when required. At inclusive schools, pupils are invited to contribute their competences and particular skills, for example, in the framework of peer support. In this way, pupils gain important early experience in developing the social skills needed to deal with differences.

There are many indicators that point to early experiences with diversity and impairments, as is the case in an inclusive school, making a long-term contribution to social cohesion in our chang-

ing society. Should we really still do without an inclusive school? The answer to this question can be found in article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has been ratified by Austria. ✕



GERMAIN WEBER

lectures psychology at the University of Vienna and has been President of Lebenshilfe Österreich since 2004.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Easy to read summary

Germain Weber is President of Lebenshilfe Österreich.

He says:

Children with learning difficulties should go to school with all other children. Everyone would benefit.

When children with learning difficulties go to a special school, they have no contact with non-disabled children. And non-disabled children do not get to know children with learning difficulties. But it is very important for both groups to get to know each other: children need to discover early on how different people are. So that everyone can live together on an equal footing in the future.

Some people believe that children without learning difficulties can learn better when there are no children with learning difficulties in the class. That children with learning difficulties should continue attending a special school. But when children go to a special school, they have almost no chance of getting a regular job.

There have been many positive experiences of children with and without learning difficulties attending the same school. There are benefits for everyone.

For example: In South Tyrol, children with and without learning difficulties have been attending the same school for a

while. In North Tyrol and East Tyrol, children are sent either to a regular school or a special school. The result: the children in South Tyrol have better results in many tests!



**JÜRGEN
WINTER**

Mayor of the Borough
of Schladming

I am passionate about inclusion, because it represents one of the few viable ways of making our society sustainable in this difficult time and brings intellectually impaired people away from the sidelines, into the middle of society – opening up a space that should be theirs as a matter of course!

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