



Summary of the inclusive participatory research on leisure time



ACCESS to Leisure

Adult education Courses on Capacity-building for the Engagement and Support of Self-advocates in the field of Leisure

2021-1-HU01-KA220-ADU-000033395

Co-financed by the European Union's Erasmus+ program

Project duration: from February 2022 to July 2024

© – 2023 – Hand in Hand Foundation. All rights reserved. Approved for the European Union under conditions.

Partnership applies open license and permit use, adaptation and distribution of the material.

<https://kezenfogva.hu>

www.atempo.at

www.facebook.com/CenterVAL

www.hubbie.brussels/nl

<https://kvps.fi>



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Contents

The research problem	3
Research design	5
<i>Research implementers</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Research methods and working progress.....</i>	<i>8</i>
Theoretical framework of the research	11
The first research phase: collecting good practices	15
<i>Methodology</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Results</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Conclusions</i>	<i>33</i>
Second and third research phase: Semi-structured interviews and Photovoice	34
<i>Methodology</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Results</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>56</i>
Bibliography.....	57

The research problem

“ The popular assumption is that no skills are involved in enjoying free time and that anybody can do it. Yet the evidence suggests the opposite: free time is more difficult to enjoy than work. Having leisure at one's disposal does not improve the quality of life unless one knows how to use it effectively, and it is by no means something one learns automatically (Csíkszentmihályi, 1997, p. 65). ”

Copestake and colleagues (2014) highlight the [critical link](#) between active participation in leisure activities by people with learning disabilities (hereinafter referred to as PwLD), improvements in quality of life and relationships with peers and informal supporters. However, PwLD often have less choice in their leisure time, resulting in a predominance of family-oriented, lonely activities often spent in their homes (Buttimer & Tierney, 2005; Singleton & Darcy, 2013; Southby, 2019).

Many research and literature reviews [attribute the perceived barriers](#) and difficulties in spending leisure time to the lack of transport, subsidies and financial constraints (Dowling et al., 2012; Charnley et al., 2019). In addition to these findings, Charnley et al. (2019) also confirm that among adults and young people with learning disabilities, research on leisure time is characterised by a lower level of personal autonomy. In many cases, decisions are dominated by the influence of parents and professionals, and people living in supported housing and group homes are more lonely, and more likely to engage in passive leisure activities (Badia et al., 2013; Beadle-Brown, Hutchinson & Mansell, 2008; Raghavan & Pawson, 2009). This is evidenced by research in the UK, which shows that between 2012 and 2014, a much higher proportion (27.9%) of adults with disabilities reported being restricted in their leisure activities compared to those without disabilities (2.8%) (EHRC, 2017; Allcock, 2018).

Meanwhile, [the importance](#) of leisure and [the role](#) it plays in our lives has been confirmed by numerous studies (Duggan & Linehan, 2013; Mayer & Anderson, 2014; Stancliffe, Bigby, Balandin, Wilson, & Craig, 2015; Southby, 2019).

It is also crucial to underline that leisure is a [complex human right](#) (Dattilo, 2013). The right to leisure is not only an inalienable part of our human rights, it is also an effective

contribution to the development of social inclusion so that people with learning disabilities can participate fully in society (Southby, 2019; Datillo, 2013). There is a growing number of policy-level measures to support leisure activities for PwLD. As supported decision-making becomes more widespread, more people will have a choice of leisure activities. However, this is still hampered by many constraints, and many improvements are needed worldwide to ensure that independence, choice, and control are as effective as possible. (Charnley et al., 2019)

The aim of the research

The research was carried out in the [ACCESS to Leisure project framework](#), involving five partner countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Hungary and Slovenia). The research contributed to understanding the leisure habits and possible difficulties of PwLDs involved by the partners.

Taking into account the limitations of the international research, we acknowledged the difficulty that the partner countries have [different](#) legal and service backgrounds, welfare systems and related economic situations. Bearing this in mind, we have structured the research around these limiting factors - so comparisons between countries are not part of our work. Instead, we wanted to create a [shared knowledge base](#) on which we could build to develop training materials and tools.

The research had three objectives:

1. To collect [good practices](#): to identify and learn about good practices that are already working effectively in the partner's field of vision
2. To get to know, through [semi-structured interviews](#), the leisure specificities of the PwLDs involved in the research, according to pre-defined criteria, based on their narratives.
3. Through a [photovoice](#) project, using photographs and associated stories, to gain a deeper understanding of the leisure specificities of PwLD.

Thus, in the course of the research, these three objectives were set, which is a complex way to help explore the leisure characteristics of the PwLD people involved by the project partners.

Research design

Research implementers

A brief introduction of the partners involved in the research, describing how they relate to the research topic:

AUSTRIA

atempo Betriebsgesellschaft GmbH is a private non-profit organization, an experienced social company specialized in the field of raising the quality of life for people with disabilities. Based in Graz, Austria we have more than 20 years of experience in working with and for people with disabilities. Atempo offers various training and learning facilities for people with learning difficulties and disabilities in Graz and supports them to get jobs on the first labour market. On the other hand atempo offers services and products which obtain its certain quality out of the fact that people with learning difficulties and disabilities are involved in the production and delivery. The aim of all atempo activities is to work towards equalization of people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Besides atempo works to remove barriers hindering people with learning difficulties and disabilities to take part in society as equal citizens. Actually atempo employs 75 members of staff who are have various expertise; from teaching trainees with special needs over text writing and designing till software engineering. The expertise of the trainers, how to meet the needs of disadvantaged youth and disabled trainees when learning on the one hand and of the Capito-staff regarding the use of media in presentation units and barrier free communication on the other hand will build the competence basis for this project. Atempo association was founded in 2000, atempo Betriebsgesellschaft GmbH in 2004.

BELGIUM

Hubbie vzw is a service provider in the Brussels Capital Region. They support persons with disabilities and mental health problems in all aspects of daily living, work, education and leisure time (Users: n=400, paid staff: n=130, volunteers: n=30). They provide residential care but also individual support at home. They have three residential settings where they support persons 7/7. They also have a large mobile team that give individual support at home in range from one our/week to some ours and several days/week. In their activity centers they offer a wide range of activities for adults: entertainment, workshops, relaxation, sport, cultural activities, excursions and trips, etc. They have two activity centers and they work there round 3 pillars. They support / train persons in order to fulfil their needs in domains of education, work and leisure time. For each of these pillars they have a team of support workers and staff

that prepares the activities. Leisure time: a relaxation program with a 'snoezel' space; entertainment activities: watching a movie, playing board games, baking and cooking together, etc.; day trips: visits of museums, city walks, excursions to other areas in Flanders; participate in events that are organized in Brussel or Flanders (pop concerts, all kind of festivities, cultural happenings etc.); workshops: music, arts and crafts, digital skills, poetry, etc.; holiday trips (at home and abroad); sport activities. They do believe in a society where each person feels at home and accepted. Where everyone has the opportunity to build relations and be an active member of society. Where everyone can make his own choices and has the possibility to develop competences and talents. Where everyone can have a quality life.

FINLAND

Kehitysvammaisten Palvelusäätiö (KVPS) - KVPS was founded in 1992 by Inclusion Finland. KVPS is the founder and owner organization of KVPS Tukena Ltd, a national provider and a developer of support services for people with an intellectual disability and others with special needs and their families. The Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability is committed to developing innovations which can make a difference in the lives of people with intellectual disability and their families by improving the quality of life for all those concerned. The Foundation engages in models of service provision that are person-centered, practical and of a high-quality standard. KVPS works to promote a good life for people with intellectual disabilities and their families by lobbying decision-makers and legislators; co-operates in advocacy work with NGO's and other parties involved in the field; promotes a person-centered approach to the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. KVPS employs 72 permanent staff, and provides respite care service for around 57 municipalities and 500 families. It counts with about 500 apartments for independent living and 700 apartments in group homes in an ordinary residential area. KVPS arranges over 300 development activities yearly. The highest decision-making authority lies on board members who are mostly parents of persons with intellectual disability.

HUNGARY

Hand in Hand Foundation (HiH) has been working for the creation of a community in which people with disabilities can live with dignity since its foundation in 1993. Our work has always been centered on the needs of people with disabilities, whom we try to reach in their own environment, both directly & indirectly, in all phases of their lives. The Foundation as a direct service provider reaches people with disabilities & their families with its legal aid & information service, its anti-discrimination signaling system, its labour market mediation service, as well as financial or in-kind donations in the event of special needs. It also supports the work of professionals through professional trainings, provides methodological service to social service provider organizations & assists families & professionals affected with various publications.

The Foundation works as an innovator in the social profession develops & models unique services for the social & the non-governmental sector, as well as the families affected. One example is the SWALLOW (FECSKE) service based on quality management & directed by the families' needs. The Foundation also plays a key role in the adaptation & dissemination in Hungary of internationally acknowledged methods, such as the Lantegi evaluation system facilitating the effective matching of abilities & jobs. The Foundation also runs several awareness raising programs about disability. The Foundation offers family counseling service for families where a member is living with disability (We are handling cases where a parent & where a child is living with disability). There is also service that helps parents with a possibly disabled newborn to raise him/her & if they made a decision to adopt their child, we facilitate the process to find adoptive parents. We are also supporting adoptive parents & adopted child too during their lifecycle of adaptation process. HiH started a service related to supported living of people with disability at different districts of Budapest. At the end of 2021 the service have 21 users in 10 separate apartments.

SLOVENIA

Association Center for psychological support Val (Center VAL) is a voluntary, independent, non-profit and apolitical association of domestic and international persons who work in the field of cognition, support and promotion of health of individuals and families who find themselves in distress and problems in everyday life. Center VAL offers professional support to members, is actively promoting their inclusion in society and representing the members interests (association helps people with inclusion in society through various programs and projects that are in a situation of exclusion or in distress). Mostly it is working with people with mental health problems, mental development and acquired brain injuries. The association works on the principle of grouping individuals for implementation of various activities and reaching goals. It currently employs 1 person while others (around 50) cooperate as associates and contractual workers. It is active in the territory of Slovenia.

The partners implemented all parts of the research equally, following the same methodology.

Research methods and working progress

The following is a step-by-step description of the research process, complemented by a description of the different research tools.

STEP ONE Preparatory phase of the research

At the preliminary partner meetings, we identified the following aspects that can affect the leisure time of PwLDs, based on previous organizational experience: independence, level of mobility, level of accessibility, income status, the form of support, trustful relationships, and characteristics of the local community and availability of the providers in the specific locality. However, local social events and programs are often advertised on online platforms to which PwLD often have limited access. We believe that exploring the possibilities online platforms offer will help PwLDs finding leisure activities suitable for their needs. In conclusion, the research topic is leisure activities of PwLDs, focusing on the use of digital devices.

STEP TWO Establishing an inclusive team in each partner country

The inclusive, participatory research was conducted with the involvement of professionals, PwLDs and local informal supporters, who eventually became part of the inclusive team in each country. Within the framework of the inclusive, participatory research (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020), our aim was to identify the factors that hinder and facilitate inclusive leisure for people with learning disabilities. The inclusive team enabled the research materials to be produced with the active, partnership-based involvement of the three target groups, with each member as an equal research partner.

The inclusive team members worked together on all aspects of the research, including regular meetings in each partner country. As the research phase was coordinated by the Hand in Hand Foundation, more frequent inclusive team meetings were organized in Hungary during this phase.

STEP THREE Building the theoretical framework for the research

The theoretical framework needed to be established to develop the research methods. Thus, in this phase, we examined related theories and research findings that contributed to developing relevant tools related to the research topic.

STEP FOUR Designing the research tools

The research was carried out in three phases (collection of good practices, semi-structured interviews, photovoice project), for each of which separate research tools and methodological guides were prepared. In each case, meetings were organized to develop the materials jointly.

STEP FIVE Conducting the first research phase: collection of good practices

We have supported the collection of good practices by providing a methodology and a template to ensure that the content and format of the good practice collection are consistent across countries. So the analysis of good practices was carried out in all countries. During this phase, we analyzed the exemplary methods and tools already used by the partners, which will be used later in the training process and the preparation of the toolkit. As a result, we have also identified how these practices can be further developed.

STEP SIX Conducting the second research phase: semi-structured interviews

We also prepared a methodological guide to support the preparation of the semi-structured interviews, and we jointly developed the interview questionnaire, which all partners used. Through semi-structured interviews, we got to know the difficulties and supporting factors for inclusive leisure with the target groups of the project (PwLD, professionals, local informal promoters). The semi-structured interviews, we learn about the difficulties of spending leisure time involving the target groups of the project (PwLD). The participants in this research phase were adults with learning disabilities (aged 18-60).

STEP SEVEN Conducting the third research phase: photovoice project

As a third part of the research, in a so-called "photovoice", participants with learning disabilities were asked to express their views on leisure activities by taking photographs of scenes highlighting the research themes. Their narratives and experiences were explained, so we learned how the photographs highlighted the

research topic (Cluley, 2016). The photos and related analysis will be used in the curriculum and training. Photovoice was originally developed by Wang & Burris (1997) as an action research tool used in health promotion research.

STEP EIGHT Analysis of research results

The research manager (Hand in Hand Foundation) collected all the research documents. The research results were analyzed and processed in three ways:

- in consultation with partners
- joint discussions with inclusive teams
- and synthesized by the Hand in Hand Foundation.

This resulted in the final document of the research report.

Research phase	Number of persons involved
Collection of good practices	15 good practices (3/partner organizations)
Semi-structured interviews	16 involved interviewees (every partner conducted at least 3 interviews with PwLD)
Photovoice	23 PwLD were involved and made photos of their free time activities for a week long & shared related stories

1. Table: The number of people involved in the research

In the research phase, all partners involved 54 people who contributed to the current direction of the results.

Theoretical framework of the research

The theoretical background of the research is mainly based on [Datillo's theory](#) (2008, 2013), a specialist in leisure education who has been working on leisure development for decades. In addition to this theory, Southby's (2013, 2019) theory of befriending provides the additional theoretical framework for this research.

In Datillo's (2008, 2013) theory, he links leisure time to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which declares the importance of the [human right to leisure time](#). Based on the definition of Russell (1996), 'leisure experiences provide opportunities for maintaining personal autonomy, self-definition, and choice' (Dattilo, 2008, p. 6). So the notion of leisure is closely linked to [freedom](#) and [self-determination](#), which are crucial components. In this context, freedom is used in two senses: on the one hand, liberty implies freedom from coercion, constraint and interference, while freedom refers to the voluntary choice and action of the individual (Sylvester, 1985; Dattilo, 2008). On the other hand, this is also implied by the Latin origin of the word leisure, which derives from the word "licere", meaning to be [free](#) (Welton, 1979).


In order to understand the concept of leisure, it is essential to clarify the notions of recreation and free time, following Datillo's (2008) theory. Although these concepts are often interlinked and their application is often confused, it is essential to highlight their differences when clarifying the concept of leisure.

The author uses free time in a context where we are [freed from everyday tasks](#) and have [no pre-planned](#) commitments (e.g. work, errands). However, this does not only refer to time well spent but also to when we are bored and need to learn how to spend this time meaningfully. Therefore, quoting Csíkszentmihályi (1997), the author argues that 'free time has both positive and negative connotations. Therefore, the definition of leisure, although it includes elements of recreation and free time, is not limited to these concepts. According to Russell's (1996) definition,

“leisure experiences provide opportunities to maintain personal autonomy, self-determination and choice” (Dattilo, 2008, p. 6).



The experience and opportunity of leisure is perceived as a **positive experience** in the participants' lives, an essential component of **quality of life**, which can be observed in subjective psychological state, identity and self-definition (Dattilo, Kleiber and Williams, 1998; Dattilo, 2013). 'Participation in leisure, in the present research, means:



**Expressing talents,
displaying skills,
realizing one's potential, and
experiencing various positive emotions associated with
participation in enjoyable and meaningful activities
(Dattilo, 2013, p. 77).**

The opportunity to spend leisure time, the experience itself, is associated with the **affirmative feeling** that people have or will have (when it comes to learning) the knowledge and skills needed for leisure activities. This in turn, empowers them and contributes to a sense of self-determination (McGuire & McDonnell, 2008; Dattilo, 2013).

Southby (2019), referring to Stebbin (2012), describes the **three main types of leisure** that we have used in our research:

- 1.** the 'casual' leisure activity: is a leisure activity of short duration, the enjoyment of which does not require any significant training, skills or qualifications (e.g. visiting a museum, eating a cake, going to the cinema)
- 2.** 'serious' leisure activity: is a major area of leisure interest that requires a high level of emotional, physical and intellectual investment of energy (e.g. taking piano lessons, being part of a sports team, painting).
- 3.** 'project-based' leisure activity: shorter, more specific, occasional or infrequent activities (e.g. art project, cooking class, a 3-day trip abroad).

All three leisure activities involve different activities and impact people's lives (Stebbins, 2012; Southby, 2019).

Beyond a general definition of leisure, it is essential to highlight the [specificities of PwLDs](#) based on previous studies. The leisure activities of PwLDs are often characterised by previously fixed, narrow identities that limit their opportunities and creative expression (Charnley et al., 2019). Allcock (2018), referring to Mencap's study (2017), categorized the main leisure difficulties of people with learning disabilities as follows:

- Lack of accessible venues and facilities
- Lack of accessible information
- Financial constraints
- Mobility and transport considerations.

The problem-solving approach proposed by Datillo (2013) helps to overcome potential difficulties arising from the interaction of learning disabilities and environmental factors. Referring to a study by Dattilo and Rusch (2012), the author concludes that focusing on problem solving helps to make leisure time more enjoyable in the long run, as by solving the difficulties encountered, they can apply the solution to other areas (e.g. work, community inclusion) and possibly help their peers.

The social network of people with learning disabilities can be of useful help in this process, but in many cases it is very limited (Verdonschot, Witte, Reishrath, Buntinx, & Curfs, 2009). The [lack of a social network](#) can hinder both the problem-solving mechanism and the leisure process that it creates. That is why the role of [social support](#) is very important in the development of leisure, in terms of engagement in leisure activities. This supportive role is often played by family members or by professionals or staff seconded by leisure service providers, but studies show (Mahy, Shields, Taylor & Dodd, 2010) that this role is more effectively played by peer-to-peer contact. The informal local supporter¹ thus play a very important role in supporting people with learning disabilities in leisure activities. Thus, as critical as the relationship with the local informal facilitator is for experiential leisure, it is difficult to foster a relationship with him or her in the local community. Therefore, Datillo (2013) suggests building on this as a basis for future leisure education programs and monitoring its impact. As a social support approach, Datillo (2013) considers one of the main solutions to be the involvement of a [local community facilitator](#), appropriate to the age group of the people concerned, who can be trained to play a mentoring role in support of leisure activities. A key question in this process is how to motivate local community members to support people with learning disabilities in their leisure activities. According to Datillo (2008), one

¹ According to our interpretation, the informal local supporter plays a bridge role in the organization of leisure time, who helps PwLDs to organize leisure time in the local community, getting to know new people, more easily and skillfully.

key issue in this process is the success and effectiveness of the [mentoring training](#), and another is the process of finding someone with similar interests in leisure. Based on Jones and Globe (2012) findings, the [characteristics of a successful mentoring](#) process were summarised by Datillo (2013) as: providing orientation, developing effective communication and collaboration systems, establishing equal relationships between mentor and mentee, maintaining high expectations, acting as a natural support for mentors, prioritising fun and socialisation, and focusing on inclusion.

In addition to the creation of a natural supportive environment (effective contact with a local supporter), the other main area of leisure education is the development of self-determination for people with learning disabilities. When developing leisure activities for people with learning disabilities, it is therefore very important to focus on [creating opportunities](#) to increase self-determination and develop the skills needed to do so.

Following the conceptual definition of leisure, we present the theory of befriending, highlighted in the context of leisure.

The first research phase: collecting good practices

The collection of good practices contributed to learning the proven **methods and tools** related to PwLD spending their leisure time. In addition, these contribute to starting from a shared basis when developing the training material and uncovering well-proven tools that can be integrated into our training.

Methodology

Research questions related to the collection of good practices:

- How are people with learning disabilities supported in their leisure activities in each partner country?
- What good practices are available?
- How do existing good practices help PwLD spend their free time?

The good practices were collected based on a common structure, along with the following elements and related issues.

Element	Guiding questions
Introduction/short summary	Please, provide a short description of the good practice being addressed
Location/ geographical area	What is the geographical area where the good practice has been used?
Stakeholders, partners	Describe the beneficiaries or the target group (users) of the good practice; the institutions, partners, implementing agencies, and donors involved in the good practice and please explain the roles of the partners.
Methodological approach	What was the problem that needed to be addressed? What methodology has been used in order to address the initial issue/problem and lead to a successful outcome and finally to the good practice?

Implementation	What were the main activities carried out? Who were the key implementers and collaborators (+their specific role in the implementation process)? Was the solution project based or was it part of the system? Please, describe the financial background of the project, too (if you have information)
Challenges	What were the main challenges, obstacles during the implementation process?
Results of the practice – outputs and outcomes	What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes? What has been the impact (positive or negative) of this good practice on the beneficiaries’?
Lessons learned	What are the key messages and lessons learned to take away from the good practice experience?

2. Table: Structure of good practices

Results

According to the division along each partner country, the following good practices were included in the analysis:

Partner organization	The type of good practice	A brief summary of good practice
atempo (Austria)	Inclusive holiday	The organization (Verein Leben ist Abenteuer) helps people with disabilities in their planning of accessible holidays and trips and also provides people who travel with them. Everything is planned according to individual wishes and needs. An official document for leisure assistance is needed.
	Inclusive sport activities (boulder and indoor climbing)	INKlettern provides the possibilities for people with disabilities to experience

		boulder and indoor climbing in an inclusive setting.
	Leisure assistance	People with disabilities can, if there is no comparable support, make use of leisure assistance. This can take place in small groups or even with one other person supporting the leisure activities.
Center Val (Slovenia)	Socio-pedagogical support	MIRNO MORJE (PEACEFUL SEA) is a socio-pedagogical European project for children and adolescents from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, children's and youth homes and institutions for children with physical and mental disabilities. Living on a sailboat enables intensive social learning and offers the opportunity to gain new and different, but important experiences and knowledge for life.
	Inclusive sport activity (running)	The activity started in 2014, when a group of people from five CUDVs joined together to take part in marathons organized at various locations throughout Slovenia. In addition to people with special needs and their relatives, there were also volunteers, employees who accompanied them, or who simply wanted to run.
	Inlcusive theatre	At the Slovensko mladinsko gledališče (Slovenian Youth Theatre), Ljubljana, the performance, which is regularly on the program, featured actors from the

		<p>Slovensko mladinsko gledališče and people with special needs. The theater play was performed in December 2019 on the occasion of the national holiday of Slovenia in Cankarjev dom, where the spectators were politically and otherwise important people, including the President of Slovenia and the Prime Minister, as well as ministers of the Slovenian government. It was also broadcast on Slovenian national television at the same time. The show was a great success and received a lot of praise.</p> <p>The show was later also designed as a radio play.</p>
Hand in Hand Foundation (Hungary)	Inclusive theatre	<p>At the „MáSzinház” they offer performing arts sessions for people with intellectual disabilities. They support their professional and personal fulfilment and build community with them. The basic principle of the pedagogical and artistic work at MáSzinház since 2005 is to consider the members with intellectual disabilities as equal partners.</p> <p>They also create performances in which non-disabled people and disabled theatre people work together as partners in a mutually accepting way - they call these inclusive performances. In addition to the performances, they run workshops in schools, training</p>

		sessions and bring inclusive theatre to companies.
	Inclusive sport (hiking)	The Stable Sport Association's main goal is to actively promote hiking as a leisure sport, which they try to make as accessible as possible, with the involvement of people with disabilities. To make people aware of the beauty of nature who have never thought of it before. The inclusion of people with disabilities as participants in the tours came naturally, as they have strived from the outset to make it accessible to all ages (from infants to the elderly). And because of this open-minded attitude, it was natural that after a while people with disabilities also joined in and signed up for their tours, and they try to give all the help.
	Inclusive sport (Special Olympics)	Initially, regular and inclusive sporting activities in a large residential institution gave rise to the Association (Tree of Life KSE). This residential institution already had a colourful sporting life (e.g. tennis courts, sports field), which was reinforced by the creation of the Association. Since then, most of the members have moved to different residences (e.g. supported housing), but the preparation for inclusive national and international competitions has continued in the new residence.
Hubbie (Belgium)	Leisure organization	The VAPH recognizes and subsidizes about twenty

		<p>leisure organizations for people with disabilities. Hubbie is one of these organizations.</p> <p>Most of the leisure organizations are responsible for the adapted leisure activities themselves. For adults they offer club work, travel, cultural outings, meeting cafes, training and sports. Some leisure organizations stimulate and guide people with disabilities one-on-one in their search for a suitable leisure organization that is not specifically aimed at people with disabilities (leisure mediation).</p>
	Collaboration for inclusive tourism	<p>The four leisure organizations for people with disabilities in Flemish Brabant have a cooperation agreement with Tourism Flemish Brabant. With the realization of the collaboration, the partners jointly aim to put the touristic assets of the Groene Gordel and Hageland regions in the province of Flemish Brabant in the spotlights with the widest possible audience, with an eye for accessibility and social tourism.</p>
	Collaboration for inclusive leisure	<p>The ‘Extraordinary Brussels meeting’ is a consultative body in Brussels in which Brussels leisure organizations work together on an inclusive leisure offer.</p> <p>Networking and consultation is central, but joint actions are also organized together with people with disabilities, such as making a vision text</p>

		'inclusion' or organizing an 'inclusion activity day'.
KVPS (Finland)	Online meetup for PwDs	The activity started in the September of 2020. It aims to tackle loneliness by providing chances for conversations for all online. The meetings online are free of charge.
	Disability card	Persons with disabilities can use the card both in Finland and in other EU member states to easily prove their disability or need of assistance when, for example, traveling by public transport or participating in sports or cultural events.
	Inclusive personal meetup	The Wild Club is a meeting point for the adults with support needs. The Wild Club is organized in the middle of the local social life, in the mainstream bars and restaurants. In the Wild Club you can meet friends, eat, drink and have nice time. There is also staff members available if you want to discuss about the loneliness, friendships or dating.

3. Table: Types of good practices

The regulations and services for inclusive leisure activities for people with learning disabilities vary widely from country to country. This diversity is reflected in the collection of good practices. However, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how each good practice works, it is important to understand the [policy characteristics of each country](#). This is particularly the case for the general methodological materials supporting leisure time, which are presented in the last part of the following table (see Table 3.). In this context, [five methodological forms](#) of support were presented. The first is an Austrian practice that shows how leisure assistance works locally. The second case is about how social skills for leisure activities are promoted in Slovenia and how these skills are developed in youth. While the third, Belgian practice shows how leisure organizations are methodologically supported. The fourth good practice, of a methodological nature,

describes a networking initiative to develop a city-wide action plan to support the leisure activities of people with disabilities, through the cooperation of organizations in the field of leisure. The fifth methodological exercise deals with the possibility of introducing the Disability Card in Europe and its use.

In addition to this, examples of all three types of leisure time are shown in the good practice section, which is also [summarized](#) in the following table.

Types of the good practice	Short summary	Benefits	Country
'CASUAL' LEISURE ACTIVITY			
01. Leisure services			
Support for accessible holidays	<p>The organization helps people with disabilities to plan accessible holidays and trips, as well as people travelling with them. They plan everything according to individual wishes and needs.</p> <p>They also offer group activities. It's a very personalized approach, because everyone's holiday is tailored as much as possible.</p> <p>They also offer group activities such as Dance-Cafe, excursions, etc. In addition, some people need more assistance during the trip, so the assistance will solve this.</p>	People with all sorts of disabilities who have access to leisure assistance.	Austria
Inclusive, accessible tourism	<p>The four leisure organizations for people with disabilities in Flemish Brabant have a cooperation agreement with Tourism Flemish Brabant. With the realization of the collaboration, the partners jointly aim to put the touristic assets of the Groene Gordel and Hageland regions in the province of Flemish Brabant in the spotlights with the widest possible audience, with an eye for accessibility and social tourism.</p> <p>In the context of "Tourism for All", Tourism Lamas-Brabant vzw wants to tailor its tourism policy to the target group of persons with a (suspicion of) disability and their family members, counsellors and informal caregivers. The 4 leisure organizations for people with disabilities developed a screening instrument to have activities screened by people with disabilities.</p>	People with disabilities and operators of tourist attractions entered into a dialogue with each other via the screening instrument. Through the training, operators of tourist attractions were offered tools to make their attractions more accessible for people with disabilities. 20 participants took part in the	Belgium

	The 4 leisure organizations for people with disabilities have developed training for operators of tourist attractions.	training on accessibility for people with disabilities. Accessibility is in the spotlight due to this collaboration.	
A meeting point for the adults with support needs	The Wild Club is organized in the middle of the local social life, in the mainstream bars and restaurants. In the Wild Club you can meet friends, eat, drink and have nice time. There is also staff members available if you want to discuss about the loneliness, friendships or dating. The idea of the Wild Club is based in the mainstream thinking, normalization. The bars, where clubs are organized are famous bars that are open for everyone, also at the Wild Club nights. At the moment the clubs are based on the volunteering and the local NGOs activities. But still after the pandemic they are going on in several cities in Finland.	The main goals of the Wild Club is to offer possibilities for person with disability to make connection with each other's and increase social activity. We made a research of the Wild Clubs in 2018 and 68% (118 answers in total) of the participants said that they have found a friendship in the Wild Club. That result really shows that if you have a place where to meet people and a bit support you can have friends and it can reduce loneliness.	
'SERIOUS' (INCLUSIVE) LEISURE ENGAGEMENT			
Indoor climbing in an inclusive	INKlettern provides the possibilities for people with disabilities to experience boulder and indoor climbing in an inclusive setting. There are several	Professionals will help people get their first experience and other people who	Austria

environment	dates throughout Austria where people with disabilities can participate.	are keen to climb in such an inclusive environment are welcome.	
Inclusive running opportunities	Pet tekov za 500 nasmehov - The activity started in 2014, when a group of people from five CUDVs joined together to take part in marathons organized at various locations throughout Slovenia. In addition to people with special needs and their relatives, there were also volunteers, employees who accompanied them, or who simply wanted to run. In recent years, various organisers have organized mass marathons with up to 13 000 participants. People with disabilities find it difficult to get involved in sporting activities in Slovenia, which are very popular because running is a "national" sport. The leaders of the organizations have linked and organized volunteer teams of runners in each CUDV.	This was just the beginning for all 125 newly enthusiastic runners with intellectual disabilities, for their parents, employees and many others who volunteer to help with this. This year, after the COVID-19 epidemic, the project is set again.	Slovenia
Inclusive hiking	The main objective of the association is to actively promote the inclusive use of performance hiking as a recreational sport. To raise awareness of the beauty of nature: to make people aware of its beauty who have never thought of it before. They can offer a participation discount to support people with disabilities: visually impaired persons can participate free of charge, with a 50% discount for an accompanying person, and those with other types of disabilities can also take part in these tours with a 50% discount For them, shorter hikes (5-6km) are available. It has always been important for the organization to organize easy distances.	The association's main goal is to actively promote hiking as a leisure sport, which they try to make as accessible as possible, with the involvement of people with disabilities. To make people aware of the beauty of nature who have never thought of it before.	Hungary

Inclusive & supportive sport facilities	<p>The Association currently has 30 athletes with disabilities working together in a classic club format - with a 3-member board overseeing and coordinating their work. One of the members of the inclusive board is a person with a mild intellectual disability, whose involvement in board decisions takes the form of supported decision-making.</p> <p>The Association is a member organization of the Hungarian Special Olympics Association. The competition calendar is organized by the Hungarian Special Olympics Association, there are 10-14 competitions per year. The Special Olympics methodology is based on divisionalization - in each sport, 6-7 groups are created, allowing everyone to play at their own level, and by divisionalizing, they are put into a group where they can play at their own level.</p> <p>Some sports - such as team sports like football - are integrated for them, with volunteers who are not disabled playing alongside them.</p>	<p>Currently, they prepare members for the national qualification and major international competitions within the framework of the Special Olympics, enabling them to train weekly and participate in competitions.</p>	Hungary
Inclusive theatre	<p>Slovensko mladinsko gledališče (Slovenian Youth Theatre) - With a chance for equal opportunity of learning the play and acting with other actors, persons with special needs receive respect and overcome difficulties in abilities to act. Their acting is different from general population since their perception of the world is different as well as their movement, understanding, relation ... They have the same needs: to be successful, recognized, loved, to have a family, friends, jobs. The main goal is to have equal OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSION.</p>	<p>On the stage of the performance Slovenska popevka, they are who they are, no different: they express themselves in their strong areas - by singing, declamation, playing musical instruments... they can. They are enthusiastic about participating in the Slovenian</p>	Slovenia

		Youth Theatre. This was confirmed by themselves at the end of the show, as were all those who prepared with them.	
	At the „MáSzinház” they offer performing arts sessions for people with intellectual disabilities. They support their professional and personal fulfilment and build community with them. The basic principle of the pedagogical and artistic work at MáSzinház since 2005 is to consider the members with intellectual disabilities as equal partners. They also create performances in which non-disabled people and disabled theatre people work together as partners in a mutually accepting way - they call these inclusive performances. In addition to the performances, they run workshops in schools, training sessions and bring inclusive theatre to companies.	Their drama performances, they aim to shape the personality, to support social contact and to facilitate communication. The word drama means: to do, to act. Its meaning implies that it requires active participation and action from all participants.	Hungary
‘PROJECT’-BASED LEISURE ACTIVITY			
Online cafes - Online forums, chat groups	KVPS arranges these meetings online via for example Teams and they are open and accessible meetings aimed to our customer group. The meetings are free of charge and open for everyone interested. Especially in the time of the pandemic our customer group can feel extremely lonely at times. We wanted to provide an accessible and easy to join service for them to ease their loneliness. The Ystävät Verkossa activity was aimed to tackle this by reaching out to people with the help of our existing network of connections.	The project found people to participate in it’s online ”cafes” and it provided them with some company and gave them a space to discuss topics that they were interested in. The participants felt, that there was, and always	Finland

	Initially the project was started as an online course for our customer group, in which the delved into such topics as friendship, relationships, self-knowledge, and every day wellbeing. Since this there have however been some additional online sessions, due to popular demand. So basically what started as a course evolved into an online meeting place for people with intellectual disability.	will be, a need for such activity as it is easier to participate online, than actually meeting people face to face.	
02. Leisure (methodological) support			
DIRECT, PERSON-CENTRED LEISURE SUPPORT			
Leisure assistance	People with disabilities can use leisure assistance if no similar support is available. This can be done in small groups or with another person supporting the leisure activities. People with disabilities needed easier access to leisure activities. By having someone to help them, they would be able to do activities in their free time. Each organization runs leisure assistance differently and the people providing the assistance are not professionals. It is very person-centered as the assistance can focus on supporting one person with a disability at a time.	As this is provided by the federal governments, the target group is strictly defined. Disabled people must be at least 15 years old, want to spend time with other people and be willing and able to learn new skills. Beneficiaries must want to do something in their free time, but they need support to do so.	Austria
Intensive social learning	MIRNO MORJE (PEACEFUL SEA) is a socio-pedagogical European project for children and adolescents from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, children's and youth homes and institutions for children with physical and mental disabilities. Living on a sailboat enables intensive social learning and offers the opportunity to gain new and different, but important experiences and knowledge for life.	The sea, the sailboat and the crew demand mutual care, consideration and respect. This way of spending time gives young people the opportunity to learn, take responsibility for	Austria, Slovenia

	<p>Christian Winkler from Lower Austria (the first president of the society) was the first to think about uniting children from countries in the war zone on the same sailboat and sailing with them under the motto "together in the same boat". In order to get rid of prejudices and learn tolerance. At that time, three sailboats with 17 children set sail. From the original idea, the project evolved and grew.</p> <p>Today, the "Peaceful Sea - Fleet for Peace" association and its project of the same name are among the most successful socio-pedagogical peace projects in Europe. More than 50 sailboats sailed from various home ports in Croatia and then sailed against each other in a star formation. After two days of sailing, they met at sea and continued their journey in one formation. In cooperation with the various ports, they each choose one that is large enough to accommodate such a numerical expedition.</p>	<p>themselves and others, teamwork, social skills, resolve conflicts in an appropriate way, manage fear / worries and express healthy competition. Through a specially designed program, they would like to help children and adolescents integrate into society and give them the feeling that they are not marginalized but part of it. The idea of bringing together children from war zones in the Balkans gave birth to the idea of the Peace Fleet, which allows socially disadvantaged children and young people (children's and youth homes, orphanages, refugee homes and institutions for children with physical and mental disabilities) to forget their daily lives and make new friendships</p>	
--	--	--	--

		on the high seas. No matter where they come from, and regardless of their religion or ethnicity.	
Adapted leisure activities	<p>The VAPH recognizes and subsidizes about twenty leisure organizations for people with disabilities. Hubbie is one of these organizations.</p> <p>Most of the leisure organizations are responsible for the adapted leisure activities themselves. For children and young people, this mainly concerns playground activities, youth workshops and holiday camps. For adults they offer club work, travel, cultural outings, meeting cafes, training and sports. Some leisure organizations stimulate and guide people with disabilities one-on-one in their search for a suitable leisure organization that is not specifically aimed at people with disabilities (leisure mediation).</p> <p>By subsidizing leisure organizations for people with disabilities, the VAPH wants to offer people with disabilities the opportunity to make full use of their free time, with the support of professionals.</p> <p>The VAPH wants to create a wide range for people with a disability on the one hand and wants to guide at least 30 people with a disability to a leisure offer on an annual basis.</p> <p>The activities should be supervised as much as possible by volunteers. The professionals coach the volunteers. In this way, more and more activities can be offered without additional staffing.</p>	<p>Through individual leisure mediation, regular organizations are sensitized to enter into discussions with persons with disabilities and to adjust their offer.</p> <p>Participants in HUP! activities became a close group of friends.</p> <p>By subsidizing leisure organizations, the importance of leisure for people with disabilities is brought to the attention.</p>	Belgium
Networking (back-ground) support for inclusive leisure	<p>The 'Extraordinary Brussels meeting' is a consultative body in Brussels in which Brussels leisure organizations work together on an inclusive leisure offer.</p>	<p>An information booklet (Genieten zonder limieten - Enjoy without limits) has been drawn</p>	Belgium

<p>offers (action plan)</p>	<p>Networking and consultation is central, but joint actions are also organized together with people with disabilities, such as making a vision text 'inclusion' or organizing an 'inclusion activity day'. Persons with disabilities in Brussels find it difficult to find suitable leisure activities. There are not many organizations that offer leisure activities for people with disabilities. On the other hand, mainstream organizations do not always know how to support people with disabilities in their organization. Groep Intro vzw invited mainstream leisure organizations and services for people with disabilities to work out an action plan 'incusion in Brussels' together, to learn from each other, to reinforce each other and to join forces for an inclusive leisure offer in Brussels.</p>	<p>up in which all Brussels leisure organizations and their contact details are listed. This booklet also indicates whether this is a regular organization or a service provider for people with disabilities. The Extraordinary Brussels Meeting put its heads together to arrive at a joint vision text on inclusion. With this they want to encourage and support organizations to take steps towards inclusion. It also includes a handy poster that can help you reflect on your own organization and help you get started. Hubbie worked out an art project together with Lasso, a cultural organization. In this project, people with and without disabilities worked together on paintings</p>	
--	---	--	--

		during different workshops	
Disability card, for leisure	<p>Persons with disabilities can use the card both in Finland and in other EU member states to easily prove their disability or need of assistance when, for example, traveling by public transport or participating in sports or cultural events.</p> <p>Service providers, who are registered as Disability Card partners are free to decide how they want to improve their services to better fit the needs of Disability Card users. For example some offer free entrance to a personal assistant.</p> <p>This way a person who cannot take part in societal life like cultural or sports events without an assistant does not have to pay for two tickets, but for one like everybody else. A person with disabilities can apply for the EU Disability Card if they meet certain conditions.</p> <p>The terms for applying the card consist of different decisions on grants and services. The application for the card is first checked by The Social Insurance Institution of Finland. If the person has been found eligible to apply they can order the card from a web based ordering system.</p>	The card allows service providers to develop their services and persons with disabilities can be taken into consideration better than before.	Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Malta, Romania, Slovenia. The pilot project was assessed by the European Commission 2019-2020.

4. Table: Summary of good practices

Conclusions

The good practices can be divided into two main groups, in connection with which. On the one hand, we learned about [services](#) that ensure inclusive leisure time in connection with sports, culture, and other social meeting opportunities. On the other hand, [methodological organizations](#) are related to leisure support, whose work is aimed at supporting inclusive leisure time.

The individual services were grouped according to the threefold (casual, serious, project-based leisure activity) division of leisure time used during the research, and it can be said that we were [able to get to know](#) good practices and [deepen](#) our knowledge concerning each group.

As the second larger unit, methodological supports were presented that provide [examples](#) of a direct, person-centered way of supporting leisure in the following areas: leisure assistance, adapted leisure activities, networking methods, disability card.

Although very different service environments and regulations characterize the leisure support opportunities, the described and analyzed good practices strengthened and complemented the professional direction of training development.

Second and third research phase: Semi-structured interviews and Photovoice

The following two research phases are described in the context of one analysis because these two research tools complement each other, enabling PwLDs to share their views on leisure time more efficiently.

Methodology

In the next, qualitative phase of the research, [semi-structured interviews](#) were recorded. In the individual, semi-structured interview situation, more emphasis is placed on personal characteristics, which provides an opportunity to explore the [individual characteristics in more detail](#). During this process, the main directions of the interview are predetermined, but there is also room to shape the course of the interview based on the answers of the people involved. During the questioning process, on the one hand, the interviewees had the appropriate openness to get to know their personal representations, and on the other hand, due to its semi-structured nature, it was still possible to proceed along with the research topic and the pre-defined system of criteria. (Pálinkó, 2009; Csabai, 2022) So, in addition to monitoring the type, structural and functional elements of the system of criteria, we had the opportunity to examine the [working mechanisms](#) of the interviewees, and the [driving forces behind](#) their actions for a deeper exploration. In the case of PwLDs, we touched on questions related to leisure time, and all questions were taken as a semi-structured individual interview. In this phase, we recorded **16** semi-structured interviews, whose main characteristics can be summarized as follows:

Organization	Number of interviewees	Average age	Types of occupation	Types of housing
atempo (Austria)	4	32	trainee at atempo employed as self-advocate	own apartment at parents' house, own apartment with assistance
Center Val (Slovenia)	3	42	working in a sheltered workshop in a creative field, working in sheltered workshop	living with parents, group home

Hand in Hand Foundation (Hungary)	3	41	school janitor, unemployed (with disability support)	supported housing, living with parents, rented accommodation
Hubbie (Belgium)	3	40	company – packaging, kitchen staff and working with children	
KVPS (Finland)	3	33	project assistant, cleaner	group home, individual type of living

5. Table: Characteristics of the interviewees

The interviews were analyzed using the method of thematic analysis, in which the aspects of the main analytical categories were defined following Datillo (2008), and the subcategories were created during the analysis.

The photovoice method complemented the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, as it provided an opportunity to get to know the leisure characteristics of the interviewees through the visual display and related stories.

Based on Cluley (2017) description, photovoice is:

- a community-based, participatory action research method
- a visual method that focuses on participant-led photography
- for those conducting learning disability research, photovoice is an accessible method for all people with learning disabilities regardless of difference in cognitive ability

” The method allows participants the opportunity to voice their worlds visually, opening up the method to people who may not be able to articulate themselves verbally as is the case for many people with learning disabilities” (Cluley, 2017, p. 42)

The goals of photovoice are to enable people (Wang, 1999, López & Wang, 2005):

- to capture and reflect their personal and community strengths and concerns by taking photographs related to the research topic.
- by discussing the photos, we promote dialogue and learning about important issues.
- developing new knowledge on issues that participants consider important.
- reaching policy makers and decision makers who can influence positive social change through public forums and the display of their photos.

Wang (1999) outlined nine prescriptive steps for implementation:

1. selecting the target audience
2. recruitment of participants,
3. educating participants about the photovoice method,
4. recruit informed participants,
5. brainstorming the focus of the project with participants,
6. distributing cameras/phones,
7. providing time for participants to take photos,
8. meeting with participants to discuss their photos, and
9. planning how to share the information with the target audience.

Although photovoice etymologically implies visual and verbal communication, the method gives participants the opportunity to express their world visually, opening the method to those who may not be able to articulate themselves verbally, such as many people with learning disabilities (see for example Booth & Booth 2003; Jurkowski & Paul-Ward, 2007; Povee et al, Booth and Booth (2003, p. 433).

In summary, photovoice offers an accessible method that provides insight into the lives of people who are often unable to communicate their experiences through more traditional research methods. Most importantly for those conducting research on learning disabilities, photovoice is an accessible method for all people with learning disabilities, regardless of differences in cognitive ability.

Participants (n=23) are asked to express their views on leisure activities by photographing scenes highlighting research topics. Their narratives explain how photos highlight a particular research topic.

Results

Building on the theoretical concept of Datillo (2008), the results of the semi-structured interviews and the photo report are presented along four main areas of analysis:

1. Self and leisure-awareness
2. Self-determination and decision making
3. Social interaction
4. Resource awareness

Self and leisure-awareness: 'to be aware of self in leisure' and 'to appreciate leisure'

The meaning of leisure time was divisive for interviewees in that for some it was closely related to the social nature of leisure time, for example, leisure time gives them the opportunity to meet their peers and through them they connect.

” ‘Free time is important for getting to know people, to relax, To keep myself busy and not get bored, Not be on Facebook all day, To have fun’ (H2)¹

‘Free time is meeting other people, Discovering new places, You are free, You don’t have to do anything, it’s your own choice, Finding some quiet time, calming down, Going on trips, Seeing people regularly’ (H3)

I need leisure to not stay in between four walls all the time, to go outside. It is important not to get bored. (H3)

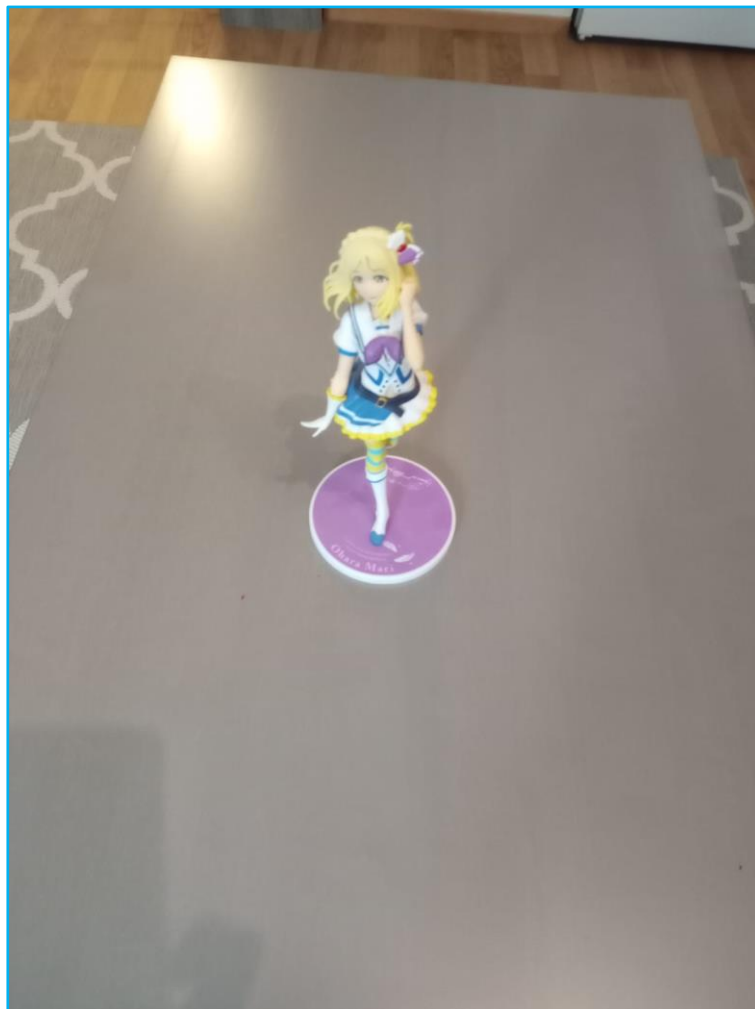
While another group emerged who used leisure time more as a way to develop their personalities and saw it as a solitary activity, as a way of experiencing their creative activity.

”

I have to figure out hobbies for myself that I can do in my free time. e.g. taking photos, photography - "but I don't have that tool now, I can't do it on my phone - I like that kind of info stuff, but my phone is not good for photography' (HH1)

For some of our interviewees, the world of video games and cartoons is also part of their everyday lives. Thus, leisure time seems important to them because they can express themselves freely and focus on topics of their own interest and choice. In video games, for example, they can get involved in fantasy worlds and find themselves in the characters and identify with them. Watching Korean and Japanese TV series can also transport them to a world of their own. This world then gives them the opportunity to really bring these beloved characters and heroes to life by dressing up in costumes. Cosplay (dressing up as your favourite character from anime, manga or video games) is fun because you get to wear the clothes of your favourite character, and they are different from everyday clothes. They mostly participate in anime and manga events, which are held a few times a year. This means of expression appeared both in the individual interviews and in the photovoice.

” This is a figurine of the anime series Love Live! Sunshine! It is one of my favourite shows. I collect figurines of characters from my favourite shows.’(Photovoice-K3)



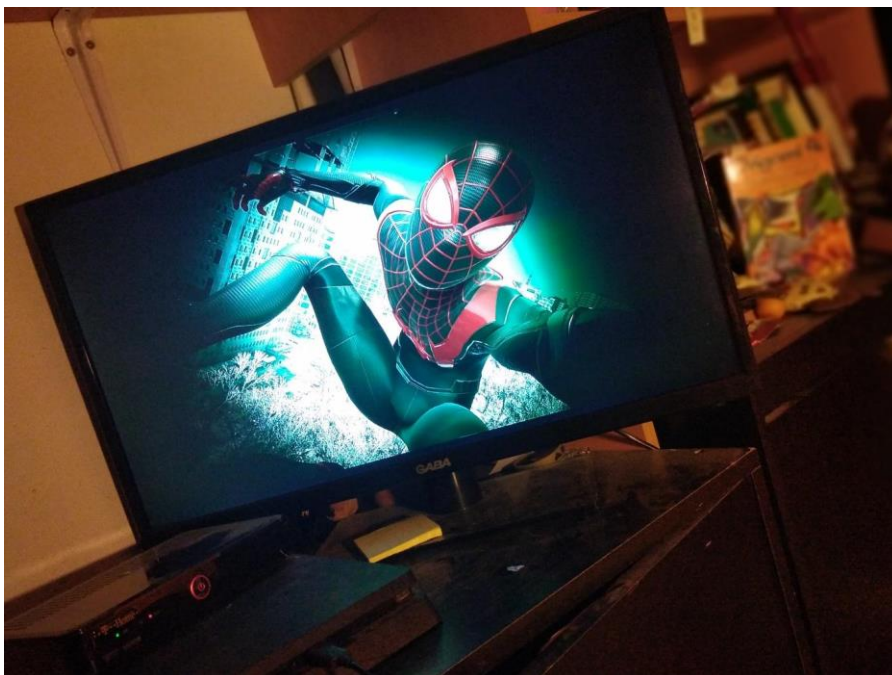
1. Photo: on Playstation at home

” I played on PlayStation 4 at home. I can really get into the Spider-Man character. The game is set in New York, Spider-Man is a superhero who saves the troubled, whatever crime is going on, he's there in a flash.

I have a lot of comic books. I can really get into stories like that. Spider-Man has this disguise, he can't disguise himself, that's why he's so clumsy in general. I like that he helps people in trouble.

In this game, I control him, while carrying out the mission that's in the story. Meanwhile, the city is buzzing with life, people walking the streets, huge traffic jams.

I don't play much these days, I've accumulated a lot of games. I usually buy second-hand. Now I have less free time. Maybe it's because of the heat, but I don't feel like doing anything these days. And now I've moved back to my mum's and I've got the computer.



2. Photo: Spider Man

**” I like to call it Spider-Man. Spiderman is from New York, I'm from Budapest, so Spiderman. In Budapest, we have to prevent crime, we have to help people in trouble, but there can't be a Spider-Man here, because it's New York. I came up with that when I was preparing for MondoCon. It's going to be in July, there are Japanese cultural programs, you can try games, you can taste food, you can buy everything Japanese. Other than that, a costume program. You can meet other people, there are other people besides me dressing up as superheroes or characters of their own devising, as I like to mix. Now it will be at the end of July, I have already bought my ticket. This time I'll be dressing up as Dead Pool and I'll also be a starfighter “
(Photovoice-HH3)**

Our interviewees gave a very varied picture of how they spend their leisure time. Some interviewees had a main area of their own choice as a leisure activity (e.g. manga drawing, playing an instrument, boxing, photography) that was closely linked to their personality, so, in their case, we could learn about "serious" leisure activities that they do in the long term, with a greater energy investment. All interviewees could select at least one area of interest, but there were large differences in how this leisure activity was present in their lives, how much it was part of their lives.

” Most of all I like to spend my free time composing my own songs. They are a mixture of Austropop, Country and Blues. Listening to music suits me. The guitar is the most important thing for me. And I also like to go to concerts. I like concerts in my favorite music genre the most. I already had a guest appearance with Christian Masser & the Country Zombies. I prefer to go to small concerts. This Wednesday I'm going to an extraordinary concert, a streetcar concert by EGON 7' (A4).

There were interviewees who were very conscious about how this chosen activity is present in their lives and why they like it. Below are a few examples of what our interviewees with learning disabilities shared about their own areas of interest:

However, in this case, those who have committed to a serious leisure activity have often chosen an activity that can be done at home, without social interaction. Consequently, so-called active, socially participatory leisure activities were not typically chosen by respondents as their main hobby activity.

Self-determination and decision making: 'to make decisions about leisure' and 'to be self-determined in leisure'

In leisure, as the literature has shown, the emergence of self-determination is very important, whereby people, with or without supported decision-making, are given the opportunity to make free leisure choices based on their individual preferences, which also implies self-awareness and awareness of opportunities.

For those interviewees where methodological support is provided to help them organize their leisure time, a certain autonomy in the organization of leisure time can be observed. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that they are aware of all the options available to them, or that the activity they choose is the one that best suits their desires and identity, but with the right help and support, it is easier to develop in their case because they already have the necessary level of self-determination. This kind of self-determination helps them to make more effective choices that are right for them, with the effective professional support. In this context, we share three relevant professional reflections:

” The respondent organizes her free time independently. She makes appointments with the personal assistant, arranges taxis and informs the staff of the residential unit about her schedule. Most of the ideas for spending his/her free time come from herself. Sometimes she gets tips from the Internet about interesting events in the vicinity, such as theatre performances, museum exhibitions, etc., and cultural events she occasionally attends’ (K1).

’The respondent organizes her own free time. Many of her activities are done from home and when she chooses. These activities do not depend on time or other people. When she wants to buy a new outfit for cosplay, she makes sure how much money she has left after the obligatory living expenses. If the money is enough for the new outfit, she buys it, if not, she buys it at another time. If there is an event near her hometown, she has breakfast, checks the bus schedule and goes to the event. She usually saves the money for the ticket beforehand’ (K2).

’The respondent organizes her own free time. He also uses travel agencies, for example, as she says she likes organized travel. She also goes to a travel fair every year to get new ideas for her travels. If she needs help, she asks friends, relatives or someone who works with her’. (K3)

However, in a number of cases, interviewees reported that there were limits to their freedom of self-determination related to leisure.

” I only draw at home alone, I don't go out very often. When my mom and I used to travel a lot, I also drew on the train’ (HH3).

’My caretaker introduces me to the options I have regarding leisure. So I depend fully on professionals. After that I chose what I want to do. It would help if professionals would show me leisure options regularly’ (H3)

’His weekday afternoons are very much dominated by his neighbor (from whom he rents the apartment), and they often spend the end of the day and the weekend together, and with her dog. e.g. having dinner together. She is a kind of support person in his life, a bit of a “mother” in his life (but there is no family connection)’ HH1.

Her parents give her a lot of free time opportunity: music practice, religious practice, etc. She also plays video games and watches things on YouTube when her parents are at home working. She and her parents are members of the Baptist Church and belong to it, participating in the activities they organize - which includes outings, helping others (youth club). Her free time is allocated by her parents, and her free time is adapted to their lifestyle. HH2.

Parental influence (or the influence of a neighbour in a parental role), the influence of a professional support person and the lack of social connections were mentioned as barriers.

Social interaction: 'to interact socially during leisure'

The majority of the interviewees, social interactions in leisure time were mostly characterised by a state of lack and consequent longing for a partner, friend or other supporter. The sense of disconnectedness was heightened when they wanted to try a new activity or visit a new place. The following quotes present a personal narrative on this issue:

“ I don't have any friends so I can't do anything together with anyone. I would like to know nice people of my age and make more friends and to be able to meet up in the weekend' (H1).

'My friends are busy. I would be free, but unfortunately my friends don't have time to meet me. If we're lucky, we could meet in person if I call them, with high school friends - they already have kids, I'm just behind in this, I don't have a family' I would also very much like a partner' (HH1).

'I used to walk with friends - but I have difficulties to find company. I don't like to go anywhere alone, but when someone calls, I'm in it. I have fantasies, e.g. if I had a girlfriend, I would go out with her to watch the sunrise. I used to watch a movie, unfortunately alone, mostly on a computer or phone, but I also usually go to the movies. I usually watch series on Netflix. Roommates are busy with their business. I also have a kind of communication barrier. It's not easy to get to know new people, I am insecure and shy, which was always a tragedy in my life. It would be good if I could get help with that too' (HH3).

The lack of social interaction was so important to respondents that many of them saw the importance of leisure as a way to meet new people through leisure activities. As the following interviewee explained: 'Leisure is important for getting to know people. I don't have any friends so I can't do anything together with anyone' (H2). In general, they reported very few friends during the interview, in relation to leisure, and often stressed how much they missed having companions with whom to organize leisure

activities. However, the importance of social interactions was highlighted by several interviewees.

The supportive power of having a partner is also illustrated by the photo diaries of two of our interviewees, who gave us a glimpse of some of the moments of leisure activities they spent together. The following moments give a sense of this:

” After work we rested, went upstairs for a wet towel. There's a playground next to G.'s apartment, and we used to go down there to play ping-pong. We have a racket and we take it down. It's built by the municipality, inside the playground - and there's a water tap.

M. taught me how to play ping pong. I competed at school when I was 12. There was a sports program. There was a teacher who taught me ping pong. I couldn't do it at first, they showed me how to hold the racket... I had to keep the ball straight, I had to go around to learn. I taught G. the same way. Now he beats me easily at ping pong.

Today G. suggested that we go out to play ping pong. We were outside for 3 hours. If we can, we play ping pong almost every week, two or three times. I have a Ukrainian friend, Alex, and he used to play ping pong with us' (Photovoice-HH2).



1. Photo: Table tennis

However, the importance of animals was also highlighted. The following quote is from one of them, who spends most of his free time with her neighbour (who appears as a kind of informal helper in his life) and her dog:

“ The only leisure activity that he really has on a daily basis is walking the dog. 'I have a neighbor who has a dog, and I spend every day [afternoon] with him, and that's how I pass the time, he's out in the garden playing, playing with the other dogs, and I'm looking after him and sunbathing in the garden' (HH1).

His neighbour's dog now sees him as a second owner, and he loves to spend time with him. This leisure activity relaxes him, helps him unwind and also provides a social experience in their garden while meeting other dog owners. Several interviewees

pointed out that pets also play a very important role in supporting leisure activities. Just like our interviewee, who spends a lot of her free time with her cat:

” My cat's name is Kitty. In the photo I'm in my parents' room. I pet my cat as often as I can. She is so soft! Kitty has lived with us since last year. I had a cat before Kitty. Unfortunately, she died’ (Photovoice-A1).



2. Photo: Petting my cat

The lack of a pet as a companion was also reflected in the photovoice section. One of our interviewees photographed the cats of the waving sculpture one day and explained his choice with the following:

” I did it for fun. I was waiting for someone to mention that they had kittens and I could say I had two and didn't need to feed them. They bring good luck according to the Chinese tradition. I say they work nonstop all the time by waving and bringing me millions. This Japanese culture can really attract me or Chinese, it's the same for me. I must have lived there in my previous life, I can really get into it, like when I watch a video, it's like I'm there.

We bought them at the Asia Center before when I was there with my mom. Now they are in the window next to the flowers. I took a picture of them from the hallway outside. I used to talk to them out of stupidity. For example, I just got a plastic parrot, named him Pacito after the Bud Spencer movies, and Mom laughed at me for giving him all those "budspenceres" lines' (Photovoice-HH3).



3. Photo: Bidding cats

In general, the online space was highlighted most often, with Facebook and Messenger being the most used platforms, as the following quote shows: *'She mainly keeps in touch with her friends on Facebook, but sometimes they can meet up'* (HH2).

Social contact was also closely linked to a sense of security. In their opinion, the lack of companionship and the feelings of 'I don't dare to go alone', 'I don't want to go alone', 'Alone is not so good', in addition to the lack of company, also lead to a lack of feeling safe: *'My mom has to take me and is with me all the time, sometimes it can be a bit of a problem. Mom doesn't have lots of time and I would like to spend time with friends as well'* CV1. The lack of companionship and loneliness was associated with a desire for both formal (professional) support and a natural, informal support person. However, some people reported that they have the possibility to get help from a professional support person. On the one hand, the role of the recreational assistant, who specifically facilitates leisure activities, has emerged, and on the other hand, where this was not possible, the role of the social support person has emerged. An example of the role of the recreational assistant in the interviewees' lives:



4. Photo: Picnic in the park

” I did I make an appointment with my leisure assistant via WhatsApp. Then we drive to the small skate park in his or my car. Sometimes I take something to drink with me. The recreational assistant is really good and shows me a few things while skating. Then we drive back and play some Super Smash Brothers on a console at my place’ (A1).

’I can go climbing with a friend or my “recreation assistant”. I like bouldering at the climbing hall. I have to take this with me: Drinks, sportswear, money. I can borrow climbing shoes, I go there by train and public transport, or with my can’ (A2).

There were also some who identified the personal assistant as someone who supports them in their leisure activities: *'Last summer she visited different parks in the city with her personal assistant and went eating in different restaurants. This was something she really enjoyed'* (K1). A similar story was told by two other interviewees who were invited by one of their carers to a birthday picnic in a nearby park:

” We talked and laughed in M. Park. At the picnic in the park we drank orange juice and ate cake, brought by A. as a surprise. We even had watermelon beforehand. We talked about A.'s son, what school was like, and how A.'s mom and dad were doing. A.'s mum is ill, we talked about that too. We celebrated G.'s birthday. We had a great time. A. helps M. to manage the money. She helps with paperwork, medical stuff. A. helped her find glasses. A. will give me money to buy a present for G.'s birthday. After the park we went home, because A. gave us lots of chestnut puree. We put them in the fridge' (Photovoice-HH2)

The importance of the role of professional support in leisure activities is therefore very much in evidence, and although the circumstances may vary from country to country (depending on local regulations and services), its importance is undeniable. Furthermore, the presence of an informal support person (partner, friend, neighbour) was the most important factor for the interviewees involved in the research.

Resource awareness: 'to use resources facilitating leisure'

There was also a wide variation in respondents' accounts of the conditions that support leisure activities. In some cases, public support allows for the development of support programs that promote appropriate self-determination in relation to leisure. These support conditions allow the persons concerned to:

- learn about opportunities in the local community (for instance: 'I get Hubbie's activity booklet by post and sign up for the activities I like' (H1)).
- provide a mentoring process to train local support persons, volunteers, so that they can more effectively support people with learning disabilities to spend their leisure time
- openness to learning is also very important in developing effective leisure time: 'I would like to be able to find new things though, I would like to learn it' (H1).
- supporting contact with family members, friends: close ties with family members, whereby the natural circle of support, even though siblings, is strong

” Professionals are not in a considerable role in the interviewee’s leisure time activities. Her sister plays a big role in her life. She is spending every other week at her sisters place and every other at her own home. Sister shares same targets of interests such as anime, manga, video games, going to events related to the topics so needed encouragement and possible help comes form her. For example the interviewee explains that she got interested in making her own youtube videos because her sister encouraged her. Now she is making them regularly and enjoying it a lot’ (K2).

At the same time, in many cases we experience difficulties and constraints in accessing leisure time, which can be attributed, among other things, to access to resources. The following examples illustrate these:

Transport Obstacles and lack of accessibility

'If it's too far I don't go'. (H1)

'I have been going to ballet lessons for a long time, I am trained by my ballet instructor. If I want to be good at it I have to train regularly and practice at home as well. Since the ballet school has moved to another location I have some problems with accessibility, I could fall on my way there. I really missed ballet

during quarantine. I love to go to shows as well but the problem is that I need someone to come with me or take me there, which is usually my mom' CV1.

Not knowing the options

'Difficult to look for new things by myself. I don't know where I live and what options I have in my neighbourhood'.(H1)

Lack of financial support

'The interviewee tells me that the main barrier she faces is still the financial one; she tells me that she might not always have enough money to do what she wants to. Interviewee tells that her computer is quite old, and it seems to "act up" on her from time to time. This also has to do with the financial difficulties, since she doesn't think she could afford to buy a new one at the moment. The same goes to her phone, although in a lesser extent' (K3).

'He has no money for concerts, for example, or for more expensive events. So he prefers to watch them at home' (HH3).

Lack of skills

'I don't use my computer to find things because I find that difficult and I don't know the right websites. Also with my smartphone I find it too difficult. I only use it for games, pictures and social media. It would help if someone would search the internet with me looking for new activities'. (H1)

'At younger age when she did not know English language so well playing video games was at times difficult, when she did not understand everything. Now after years of playing she understands most of the language used, but sometimes she has to check a word or two from a dictionary. Sometimes if she gets stuck on a game and does not know what to do she goes to YouTube to look for answers and help' (K2).

Lack of support

'Her leisure time is very much tied to the factor that how much hours she can get with her personal assistant from the municipalities. Aid from a personal assistant is very important to her self-determination and participation'. (K1)

To try out leisure activities that he hasn't tried before, he would need a safe partner, - and who doesn't get you into silly situations. → 'I've never partied, that could be a factor, it's that kind of introversion that makes it difficult. I don't dare to do it alone, I need a safe partner.' (HiH01)

Safety

If it's too late I don't go because I won't get home safely. (H2)

Being safe at home - Prefers to do things at home (HH1)

Conclusion

When looking at the specific leisure activities of people with learning disabilities, it is clear that there are underlying **difficulties** that often prevent them from finding leisure activities truly fulfilling and enjoyable.

One of the fundamental barriers is the area of self-determination, which means that their leisure activities are often **not organized** according to their abilities and needs, and thus do not provide them with opportunities for enjoyment and fulfilment. We have therefore identified the effective promotion of **self-determination** as a key area for further development.

Research shows that there should be a strong emphasis on developing partnerships that help them to organize their leisure time around recreation in the **local community** and to become **partners** in the leisure activities of their choice. This could address the next main problem, which was reinforcing **loneliness**.

This is why we have chosen the theory and methodology of **befriending**, which helps people to build local relationships in the process of organizing leisure. In addition, the local relationships formed during leisure activities also promote a sense of security, which we also identified as a key area. The promotion of a sense of **safety** in both online and offline spaces emerged as an important issue.

Effective access to **local resources** was identified as a further area for improvement. In mapping local resources and opportunities, the use of digital tools was identified as a **very important** area.

We therefore believe that leisure education is a dynamic process that provides tools and methods for developing leisure activities and raising awareness of potential resources. It is a developmental process in which persons with learning disability gains a better **understanding** of themselves himself/herself, and their his/her social relationships, and of their relationship between leisure and lifestyle (Datillo, 2008).

Bibliography

- Allcock, A. (2018). Frameworks for child participation in social care. *ESSS Online*.
- Badia, M., Orgaz, M. B., Verdugo, M. A., & Ullan, A. M., (2012). Patterns and determinants of leisure participation of youth and adults with developmental disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 57(4), 319–332.
- Booth, T. & Booth, W.(2003). Self-advocacy and supported learning for mothers with learning difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 7(2): 165–193.
- Buttimer, J. & Tierney, E. (2005). Patterns of leisure participation among adolescents with a mild intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability*. 9(1), 25-42.
- Charnley, H., Hwang, S.E., Atkinson, C. & Walton, P. (2019) ‘If I were given the chance’: understanding the use of leisure time by adults with learning disabilities, *Disability & Society*, 34:4, 540-563.
- Csíksszentmihályi, M. (1997). Flow – Az áramlat. Akadémia Kiadó, Budapest.
- Cluley, V. (2016). Using photovoice to include people with profound and multiple learning disabilities in inclusive research. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 45(1)
- Copestake, P., Seikh, S., Johnston, S. & Bollen, A. (2014). Removing barriers, raising disabled people’s living standards. *OPM and Ipsos MORI*.
- Csabai, L. (2022). Felépülés a helyi közösségben. Közösségi alapú működés vizsgálata a támogatott lakhatási szolgáltatás, valamint az igénybe vevő, pszichoszociális fogyatékosággal élő személyek körében. *PhD értekezés*, Budapest.
- Datillo, J. P., Kleiber, D.A., Williams, A. (1998). Self-determination and enjoyment enhancement: A psychologically-based service delivery model for therapeutic recreation. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal* 32:258-271.
- Datillo, J. (2008). Leisure education program planning: a systematic approach. Venture Publishing.
- Datillo, J. P., Rusch, F. R. (2012). Teaching problem solving to promote self-determined leisure engagement. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal* 26(2):91-105.
- Dattilo, J.P. (2013). Inclusive Leisure and Individuals With Intellectual Disability. *Inclusion* 1(1), 76-88.
- Duggan, C. & Linehan, C. (2013). The role of ‘natural supports’ in promoting independent living for people with disabilities; a review of existing literature. *Special Issue: Intellectual Disability and Professional Practice in an Irish Context*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 199-207.

EHRC. UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017). General comment No. 5 (2017) on living independently and being included in the community.

Hassan, D., Dowling, S., McConkey, R. & Menke, S. (2012). The inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in team sports: lessons from the Youth Unified Sports programme of Special Olympics, *Sport in Society*, 15:9, 1275-1290.

Lopez, E. D. S, Eng, E., Robinson, N., & Wang, C. C. (2005). Photovoice as a community-based participatory research method: A case study with African American breast cancer survivors in rural Eastern North Carolina. In B. Israel, E. Eng, A. J. Schulz, E. Parker and D. Satcher (Eds.), *Methods for conducting community-based participatory research for health*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mahy, J., Shields, N., Taylor, N. F. & Dodd, K. J. (2010). Identifying facilitators and barriers to physical activity for adults with Down syndrome. *J Intellect Disabil Res.*;54(9), 795-805.

Mansell, J., Beadle-Brown, J., Whelton, B., Beckett, C., Hutchinson, A. (2008). Effect of Service Structure and Organization on Staff Care Practices in Small Community Homes for People with Intellectual Disabilities. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*. Volume21, Issue5, 398-413.

Mayer, R. E. (2014). Introduction to multimedia learning. In R. E. Mayer (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of multimedia learning* (pp. 1–24). Cambridge University Press.

McGuire, J., & McDonnell, J. (2008). Relationships between recreation and levels of self-determination for adolescents and young adults with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 31(3), 154–163.

Pálinkó, É. (2009). *Fiatal kutatók életútja és szakmai identitása*. PhD értekezés, Budapest.

Raghavan, R. & Pawson, N. (2009). The Aawaaz project. Meeting the leisure needs of young people with a learning disability from South Asian communities. *Mencap – The voice of learning disability*.

Russell, D. W. (1996). UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3): Reliability, validity, and factor structure. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 66(1), 20–40.

Singleton, J., & Darcy, S. (2013). ‘Cultural life’, disability, inclusion and citizenship: Moving beyond leisure in isolation. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 16(3), 183– 192.

Southby, K. (2013). Social inclusion through football fandom: opportunities for learning-disabled people. Volume 16, 2013 - Issue 10: *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Sport and Leisure*.

- Southby, K (2019). An exploration and proposed taxonomy of leisure–befriending for adults with learning disabilities. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, Volume 47, Issue 4., 223-232.
- Stancliffe, R. J., Bigby, C., Balandin, S., Wilson, N. J., & Craig, D. (2015). Transition to retirement and participation in mainstream community groups using active mentoring: a feasibility and outcomes evaluation with a matched comparison group.
- Stebbins, R. (2012). The idea of leisure: First principles. *New Brunswick: Transaction*.
- Sylvester, C. D. (1985). Freedom, leisure, and therapeutic recreation. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*. 19, 6-13.
- Vaughn, L. & Jacquez, F. (2020). Participatory Research Methods – Choice Points in the Research Process. *Semantic Scholar*.
- Verdonschot MM, de Witte LP, Reichrath E, Buntinx WH, Curfs LM. (2009). Impact of environmental factors on community participation of persons with an intellectual disability: a systematic review. *J Intellect Disabil Res*. Jan;53(1), 54-64.
- Wang, C., DrPH & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment. Volume 24, Issue 3.
- Wang, C. (1999) Photovoice: a participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. *J Womens Health Mar*;8(2):185-92
- Welton, G. (1979). Leisure in the formative years. Leisure emergence and expansion. 111-155.