

TITLE

A certification scheme creating job opportunities for young people with intellectual disabilities

Chile: Fundación Descúbreme – Providing certification for secondary education and vocational training

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Descubreme (“Discover Me”) Foundation is a Chilean NGO that works for the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. With the cooperation of two partner organizations, Descubreme has recently started a process of certification to enable young people with intellectual disabilities to participate in secondary education and vocational training.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Initial participants: 10
- Jobs created in 2015: 8

PROBLEMS TARGETED

A national study shows that in Chile only 23 per cent of people with disabilities finish the full primary and secondary education programme of 12 years, and only 9.1 per cent complete higher education. For young people with intellectual disabilities the situation is even worse, since the Ministry of Education does not recognize the special education curriculum, which is where many of these students must study. Consequently, they are virtually excluded from secondary and any further education.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The Descubreme Foundation along with the private company SK Bergé and the Chilean Chamber of Construction have started a pilot project to certify the education of students with intellectual disabilities with the appropriate authority – Chile Valora (Sistema Nacional de Certificación de Competencias Laborales). For the project, ten students of the Los Escuela Diferencial Santa Teresa de Ávila were selected, and the knowledge and competences that they acquired during the training programme and work practice were officially recognized. This enabled eight students who passed the exam to obtain jobs in the open labour market. The two students who not receive certification will continue their training and be given the opportunity to take the test again. Project graduates currently work in a cafeteria, in a grocery shop, as operator of assisted sales, and in administrative support. They earn US\$460 per month, which is above the country’s minimum wage. Project staff provided support during the first six months of employment to ensure a smooth transition.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

This pilot project had a total cost of US\$11,706, and the model will now be replicated with 20 young people with intellectual disabilities. Moreover, three companies have already shown interest in hiring the participants after they have received their certification.

QUOTE

“After my practice period, this job was a great challenge both personally and professionally, but my tutor helped me a lot. I have left the school behind, and now I consider myself an adult and am very happy.”

— Nicole Herrera, kitchen assistant, Sodexo.

CONTACT

Ms. María Soledad MARTINEZ ULLOA

+56226606117

maria.martinez@descubreme.cl

www.descubreme.cl

