recognized to some extent by us all, childlike or dissonant behavior in adulthood, particularly in the workplace, is not seen as acceptable, which means it is rejected. Furthermore, when a syndrome or learning difficulty is part of the equation, any psychological or psychiatric problems, drops in performance, withdrawals or changes in behavior can be mistakenly linked to the learning difficulty itself, with the result that they are neither diagnosed nor treated. One of the ramifications is the burgeoning rate of depression among adults with DS.

Today, families and professionals are focusing our care and effort on the elderly. Life expectancy has risen across the board, including people with ID and DS. This issue is being tackled fundamentally from the medical point of view, from a health perspective. Integration in social and leisure activities will not be very challenging for the elderly because, like in childhood, their active role diminishes. Senior citizens need support again, they become more reliant on others and decisions are made for them.

Nevertheless, we are still unable to create an image in our minds of the person with ID as an adult entitled to hold a job, have a partner, manage their life and make choices. We cannot overlook the longest stage of life, the most rewarding. We cannot forget that human beings, with or without ID, have to establish themselves as the subject, build an identity and know, accept and love themselves if they are to live life to the full both emotionally and socially. Focusing on learning and training is only doing half the job. We need to trust.

People with a disability need to have a life plan. Our challenge now is to acknowledge and respect growth times and to accept the adult condition rather than lifelong childhood. If we firmly believe that people with disabilities have the potential to grow and be part of our society, they are bound to respond to our plans. If there are no future plans for them, they will grow up without hope, without cherishing their own achievements, and remain entrenched in the rut of childhood forever.

References

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News

On the occasion of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, the Spanish Red Cross has awarded the Gold Medal to the Catalan Down Syndrome Foundation. This award has previously been given to 17 people and institutions that have stood out for their commitment to society and hard work. The prize-giving ceremony was held on 8 May 2007 at the National Theatre of Catalonia, where the Foundation's President, Montserrat Trueta, received the award from HRH the Infanta Cristina.

Federico Mayor Zaragoza (President of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace and former Director General of UNESCO) is, as of 24 May 2007, a new Honorary Trustee of the Catalan Down Syndrome Foundation.