

Necessary considerations for accessible information to Deafblind people!

By Alex Garcia

The first aspect to be remembered is that the group of deafblind people is formed by singularities which must be known and respected: individualities, specific need and skills.

There is a certain similarity and it depends on the degree of complexity of the deafblind person we are talking about. In this context, I strongly affirm that there are two groups:

Deafblind persons with lower complexity and most often seen; and Deafblind persons with higher complexity and less often seen.

In other words:

The most frequent cases correspond to deafblind people who still have some visual and hearing residuals and are able to access information faster, easier and at low cost. In general, besides having these residuals, they can access best-known technologies which exist to assist blind and deaf people. It is essential to pay attention to details which has a lower cost, because we must keep in mind that when there is a person with disabilities in a Family it implies a higher family budget.

When the degree of deafblindness is higher, difficulties are also bigger, although they are less frequent to be found. Due to the low or non-existent audio and hearing residuals, the access to information is more difficult, slow and expensive because communication is restricted to tactile approaches. Generally, deafblind people in this situation won't be able to use technologies developed to blind and deaf people.

What are the implications of this difference?

To the less frequent group of deafblind people, it is not a matter of addressing accessibility for accessibility. There is an evident need to access technologies, devices and physical resources, despite of having human resource available. In economic terms, the cost is extremely high.

I believe that this short presentation makes it clear what I mean.

To the most frequent deafblind persons group the economic cost of their accessibility is endlessly lower in comparison to the one for less frequent deafblind persons. What scares me – if I can say that there is something that still scares me in this life - is that for centuries there is a relation of cause and effect between accessibility and economy, more specifically in deafblindness and multiple disabilities field.

And here I am, in 2020, talking about this topic once more. Am I "taking sand to the beach" or are there groups and persons who make this point invisible because of many interests?

Well, I am still a deafblind person and a person with hydrocephalus and rare disease who is restless!

Some very important details:

When I refer to a less frequent deafblind person, I mean not only his/her deafblindness but also other conditions of associated disabilities such as health, emotional, economic and family aspects.

In fact, the structural issue (underlying) is an economic one. More than 50% of people with disabilities in Latin America live in a situation of poverty and extreme poverty; if we add the extraordinary expenses of the families which have at least a member who has any kind of disability, I believe it won't be possible to even talk about any kind of family budget. The State knows it and prefers it is not known. Data concerning disabilities remains ridden or manipulated.

Best regards and please, share this text!

Alex Garcia – Deafblind person with hydrocephalus and rare disease.