

## Breaking down barriers to scientific knowledge

Spain – Ciencia Sin Barreras

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

“Ciencia sin Barreras” (Science without Barriers) aims to promote science among people with functional diversity and those who do not have wide access to scientific knowledge. The project was launched in 2012 when a group of geologists noticed the lack of knowledge about the earth sciences among society in general. Since then, the programme has achieved a number of goals in promoting not just geological but multidisciplinary scientific activities. Some have focused on secondary education students and others on the general public. In keeping with the project’s motto, “science for everybody,” the organization began to promote activities for people with learning disabilities, first for Down syndrome students and later for blind and deaf/blind adults.

### QUOTE:

*“Science for everybody: Improving the life quality of people with functional diversity by facilitating the universal access to scientific knowledge.”*

— Mr. Miguel Gomez Heras, Chairman, Ciencia sin Barreras

### FACTS & FIGURES

- To date, 107 people with disabilities have participated in the organization’s activities.
- Activities have involved 32 researchers and/or lecturers, 27 students, and 18 functional diversity specialists.
- The programme has 30 associated members and 15 collaborators.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

The founders see access to scientific knowledge as a universal right that should not be refused to people with disabilities. Unfortunately, prejudices and attitudinal barriers that regard persons with disabilities as unable to acquire scientific knowledge are still prevalent.

## SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

“Science without Barriers” supports the dissemination of scientific content to groups that would otherwise have difficulty accessing such information. This accessibility includes the direct adaptation to individual sensory needs and levels of abstraction (i.e., collectives with functional diversity), as well as flexibility in the schedule and place of the dissemination. Another important factor is the sociological nature of these activities, as they promote interactions with scientists who are normally not available to these groups. The dynamic component of the interrelationships allows for people with functional diversity to fully participate, asking whatever questions they wish of the scientists; and for the scientists it is an enriching experience in that it teaches them how to explain certain concepts using different language channels and dealing with difficulties rarely found in standard teaching situations.

## OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

In December 2015 the organization’s staff will conduct the first Science Divulgateion Conference, and in 2016 they will participate in the International Year of Global Understanding and will provide ongoing activities for people with intellectual disabilities as well as the deaf and blind. All work follows the principles of universal design so that an activity adapted for someone with a special education needs will be more accessible to everyone, and therefore all of their activities seek to have an impact on the general public. Further, the activities carried out are also used as educational research projects, the design and results of which have been published in various journals. These publications can be used to adapt the activities in other countries.



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