

SOLIDARITY AGAINST DISABILITY

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National solidarity still on its way

The National Disability Conference has drawn up an initial appraisal of the outcome of the 11th February 2005 bill. Despite universal, national solidarity needs yet to become fully consolidated and accountable. If people with disabilities are to be seen not as people deserving of care but as people deserving of rights, this solidarity must become proactive and real.

Since the post-war period, solidarity actions have mainly focused on the protection of disabled people. Recently, these actions concern their emancipation by empowering them to act. This foundation was laid down in the 2005 bill and aims to move away from a patronizing and protective solidarity.

Several means are possible to achieve this goal claimed by people with disabilities. One of them is to provide direct funding for people with disabilities instead of funding institutions or facilities. Another is providing support for professionals as their activities change.

For this solidarity to become a reality, a rapid change in practices is necessary

The COVID-19 crisis marked a turning point in the organization of care for children and adults with disabilities: home care was favored over institutional care. We should take the most from these experiences to overcome the existing obstacles. Major and rapid structural reforms should take place at the level of a French department, in order to create new players such as the 360 communities that bring support people with disabilities beyond the scope of medical and social expertise.

The health crisis has also highlighted another area in which France is particularly lagging: prevention and access to healthcare for people with disabilities. This access to care is still in its infancy, mainly due to shortcomings in the initial training of care providers and a lack of cooperation between stakeholders.

Nevertheless, good practices do exist in areas where institutions have opened their doors to external stakeholders, these now need to be deployed across all territories to overcome the current territorial inequities. Support for professionals in these changes in practices is also needed to help secure pathways to national solidarity in the service of the individual. Alternative means of communication, such as communication technologies, need to be implemented and represent a major challenge for the integration of the individual with disabilities in his or her global pathway.