Inclusive outreach practices in Palaeontology: Inclusive-Coworking

Alejandra García-Frank (1), Miguel Gomez-Heras (2), and Omid Fesharaki (1)
(1) Departamento de Paleontología, Facultad de Ciencias Geológicas, Madrid, Spain (agfrank@ucm); (omidfesh@ucm.es),
(2) Departamento de Geología y Geoquímica, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
(miguel.gomezheras@uam.es)

Previous experiences with people with both physical and intellectual functional diversity around palaeontological
issues have demonstrated the important value of science outreach directed to people with disabilities. The
aforementioned practices act twofold: as a learning tool and also improving the quality of life of the participants
and thus, their self-image.

All these pioneer experiences were the first step in a process of developing new attitudes contributing the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of United Nations, where among the 17 goals proposed an effective
social inclusion of people with disabilities is required. For this, real inclusive practices in geological outreach are
imperious. A close cooperation with all the parts (researchers and participants), in a kind of coworking attitude
is needed. This Inclusive-Coworking is considered in the sense of social gathering in order to share equal values
and look for the synergy that this different outlook implies. And what is more important: the change of role
of the previously learners into an active part of the scientific outreach, providing the adequate methodology for that.

The offer of non-formal learning activities normally includes the participation of university professors and
researchers in Science Week editions. During the 2016 session in Madrid, four adults with intellectual disability
who were participants in the previous edition, contributed in the palaeontological workshop. They were in charge
of four of the eight modules explaining the origin of fossils and how to collect them, the evolution of equids’
limbs, and the main dentition types in vertebrates to the twenty 16 year old secondary students who attended the
workshop. During the development of the experience all the students were pleased with the inclusive approach,
and the interaction of all participants was fruitful. Although the explanations took a bit more time when made by
our functional diverse fellows, all the abstracts concepts were correctly described and the social perspective of the
experience had an excellent reception.

This activity was prepared and designed with expert educators and other professionals related to disability
in order to guide the scientists with regard to the learning strategies and specific needs of the attendees. Most of
our previous activities dealing with palaeontology were targeted either towards people with, or without disabilities,
but never mixing them.

So far, successful lab-based activities adapted to people with both intellectual and sensory disabilities have
been developed, but this is the first experience in which functional diversity people act as teachers themselves.
This is an important step forward in eliminate barriers to non-formal education. We hope that our actions, based
on the Agenda for Sustainable Development more Inclusive model, can inspire other actions and programs dealing
Accessible Geoscience.

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