

European Down Syndrome Association news



Spain / Balearic Islands ASNIMO (Asociation Sindrome de Down de Baleares)



Internet: www.asnimo.com

Founded: 20 November 1976. Private, non-profit organisation

President: Juan Perera Mezquida

Members: 382

Number of users: 412 people with Down syndrome, of all ages

Finances: member fees 10%; State/community grants 80%; Donations 5%

Main goals

- to study and research Down syndrome from its specificity and apply scientific advances to educational practice in order to try and improve it;
- to offer the association's beneficiaries a broad range of educational and care services for all the life phases of the individual;
- to orient all educational and care practices towards the autonomy and normalisation of people with Down syndrome.

Services

- **Prevention and genetic advice:** In this department, ASNIMO specialists analyse risk factors, inform about Centres and prenatal diagnosis techniques, and offer genetic advice to families or anyone who requests it.
- **Early support:** This service offers children with Down syndrome (from 0 to 5 years) the specialised education (sensorial, cognitive, motor and affective) that is necessary for their development to be as close to typical parameters as possible. Parents are offered information and guidelines for their child's acceptance and education.
- **Inclusion in mainstream schools:** When pupils are 5 years old they go to classes at the mainstream schools in our Autonomous Community. In these schools, they have official support from an aural comprehension and language teacher and from a therapeutic educational psychology teacher. Furthermore, ASNIMO supports these centres with a service created in 1987 called Mobile Integration Support Units (UVAIs). This service is formed by practitioners specialising in Down syndrome (speech

therapist, psychologist, psychomotor therapist, and educationalist) who regularly visit on a weekly basis those classrooms in which pupils with Down syndrome are included, making curriculum adaptations, acting as intermediaries with families, and giving special educational support sessions.

ASNIMO currently has 32 pupils who are receiving this service.

Special education units

We have 4 special education units, with a total of 15 pupils. These classrooms are only for pupils who require very significant curricular adaptations and, owing to added difficulties, cannot be in mainstream schools.

Adapted Vocational Training Units (T.V.A.)

After Special Education, pupils go on to Adapted Vocational Training, where they are taught and prepared professionally, in this case, for work within the areas of Gardening, Administration and Commerce. In the school year 2004-2005, the TVA was used by 14 young people.

Speech therapy, physiotherapy, psychotherapy and psychomotor therapy as schooling support activities

In the last school year we provided support for children with Down syndrome from our centre and from mainstream schools. This is one of the services most requested by parents. The number of students registered varies between 16 and 32.



Professor Juan Perera Mezquida, director of ASNIMO and past President of EDSA

European Down Syndrome Association news

Assisted housing

We currently have two assisted housing units running.

The 220-day "S'Estel" assisted housing unit homes people with Down syndrome whose family homes are in places a long way from Marratxí. The home is open from Monday to Friday.

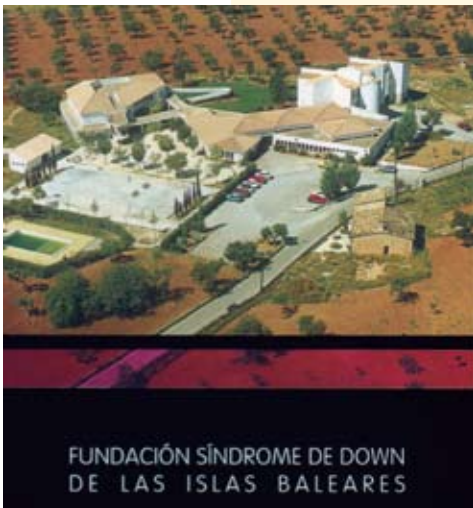
The "Sa Lluna" assisted housing unit is open 365 days per year, housing adults with Down syndrome without a family to care for them or whose family members are too elderly to be able to take care of them.

Health monitoring programme

ASNIMO has a Medical Unit. A paediatrician, a neurologist and a traumatologist, each attend twice per week, to look after the health of people with Down syndrome of all ages. The doctors produce reports on people with Down syndrome who request them and carry out medical explorations, regular check-ups, and specific consultations upon the request of families. The protocol followed is the "Preventive Medicine for Down Syndrome Programme", published by FEISD (2005). ASNIMO also has a team of external medical advisors.

Resources Centre for Inclusion

The Centre that ASNIMO maintains in Marratxí has a collaboration agreement with the UIB (University of the Balearic Islands) and it is a training centre for professionals and parents, as well as a work experience centre for University students. It is also a centre for research and publications, equipped with a good library specialising in Down syndrome and a database, and it receives the main magazines from around the world on Down syndrome. Furthermore, every 3 years ASNIMO organises an International Symposium of a scientific nature on different aspects of Down syndrome.



FUNDACIÓN SÍNDROME DE DOWN
DE LAS ISLAS BALEARES

"Sempre Verd" special employment centre

SEMPRE VERD INVERNADEROS S.L. is a Special Work Centre that was created in 1992. This means that it is a company with the duties and obligations of any company, that it competes in a free market, but that part of its workforce are disabled people, in our case, people with Down syndrome. Its promoter was ASNIMO (Down Syndrome Association of the Balearic Islands).

It boasts modern facilities with 3000 m² of aluminium and glass greenhouses, equipped with advanced technology (automatic programming of systems for watering, shade, humidity, airing, temperature, etc.), which is wholly dedicated to the cultivation and sale of tropical ornamental plants.

There are 18 people working at SEMPRE VERD, of which 10 are workers of both sexes, with ages between 23 and 45 years, with Down syndrome.

We believe in their potential and we train them at the Gardening Workshop so that they can become competent workers at this centre.

Job integration in ordinary companies

It is clear to our Association that the best thing we can do today for individuals with Down syndrome is train them to work, find them a job and give them support in that job. ASNIMO has five workshops for learning and training in gardening, computers, bakery, furniture restoration and dried flower crafts, where future workers receive specialised courses to prepare them for work. Afterwards – through the supported employment system – they are introduced into the world of work.

Publications

The teaching and professional activity of Prof. Juan Perera and his ASNIMO team has focused on the world of disabilities and very especially on Down syndrome, in which he is recognised as world specialist for his conference papers, research and publications. He is the author or co-author, among others, of the following texts:

- "Síndrome de Down: programa de acción educativa" (Cepe. Madrid 1990);
- "Síndrome de Down. Aspectos específicos" (Masson. Madrid 1995);

European Down Syndrome Association news

- “Síndrome de Down: perspectivas psicológica, psicobiológica y socioeducacional” (IMSERSO. Madrid 1997);
- “Cómo hacer hablar al niño con síndrome de Down” (CEPE, Madrid 1999);
- “Síndrome de Down: revisión de los conocimientos actuales” (Espasa. Madrid 2000);
- “Vivir con el síndrome de Down” (CEPE, Madrid 2004).

Also around thirty articles specialising in issues such as early attention, language, education, work integration and psychology of Down Syndrome. His latest book, edited with Professor Jean A. Rondal of the University of Lieges, titled “Down Syndrome: neurobehavioral specificity”, was published in April 2006.

Currently he is translating and adapting to Spanish the educational modules published by The Down Syndrome Educational Trust of Portsmouth (UK).

Awareness campaign

In Spain, by advice from the UNESCO and with the approval of the European Disability Forum, the only day celebrated is on 3 December each year, the International Day of People with Disability.

Projects and campaigns

Our main projects for the next few years are:

- Extension of the SEMPRE VERD Work Centre
- Creation of two 365-day Assisted Housing Units
- Renewal of the ASNIMO kitchen facilities

Our main projects carried out in recent years were:

- Translation and adaptation into Spanish of the DSET modules
- Socrates Grundtvig Programme on Sex and Relationships Education of people with Down Syndrome in collaboration with another 5 European countries
- Organisation of the *VI International Symposium on Down Syndrome* held in Palma de Mallorca in February 2005, resulting in the publication of the book on “Specificity in Down Syndrome” which will be translated into several languages.

General Information

The main problems with respect to people with Down syndrome on the Balearic Islands are:

- Access to secondary teaching in mainstream centres
- Job integration in ordinary companies
- Housing for adults

These things should be urgently changed:

- The training of good professionals in Down syndrome.
- More resources and support for families.

Numbers

In the Balearic Islands there are approximately 6 children born with Down syndrome every year. (Previously there were approximately 12 children born annually, so this might be the effect of pre-natal diagnosis).

Situation of babies and toddlers

Excellent. We have all the essential services and support.

- Medical care: excellent
- Physiotherapy: excellent
- Early support: excellent
- Other therapies: excellent
- Support for families: excellent

At our centre, services provided include physiotherapy, psychotherapy, psychomotor therapy and speech therapy when needed.

Situation of children of school age

Children of school age are included in mainstream schools. ASNIMO – as explained previously – has professionals specialising in Down syndrome who travel on an itinerant basis around the inclusive schools to give specialised support, both on a schooling level and in social skills. Through Individualised Curricular Adaptation (ACI), the educational objectives of each child are set and the specialised support necessary is provided to achieve those objectives.

In the case of children with Down syndrome who, owing to their unique characteristics, cannot be included in mainstream schools, they receive teaching in special classrooms at ASNIMO’s “Príncipe de Asturias” Centre.



September 2006, the Prince and Princess of Spain (D. Felipe and Dna. Letizia) visited ASNIMO

Situation of adults

Only 7% of adults aged over 20 years are working in ordinary companies. Another 4% are working in protected companies or workshops.

Work places are: Banks and Savings Banks, travel agencies, leisure centres, restaurants, laundrettes, hypermarkets, garden maintenance.

Adults live in Assisted Housing or at their family home. Finding their own home follows the same pattern as any other person. Normal practice involves taking out a mortgage with a family member acting as guarantor.

We have 8 persons with Down syndrome over 50 years at ASNIMO of which 4 have Alzheimer disease.

Their situation depends on the family situation, the medical care and educational support received, their intellectual level and the resources available to them.