

Reaching out to persons with disabilities through telecenters

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Thursday, 26 February 2009



PWDs learn to use the computer at the telecenter in Club Bellvitge in Spain

During last month's telecentre.org Community Facilitators Meeting in Barcelona, Spain, we had the opportunity to visit the telecenter housed at Club Infantil i Juvenil Bellvitge, one of the social inclusion facilities being managed by Fundació Esplai. Said telecenter is under the government telecenter network in Catalunya called Red Omnia, and is actually one of the first centers established under the network.

Red Omnia has three areas of action: employability, community integration and training.

Aside from the fact that the entire center was well-maintained with very good facilities to boot, what really struck me most was the diversity of services offered at the telecenter, foremost of which is the program that they have for persons with disabilities or PWDs.

“In a day, we cater to about twenty to thirty persons with disabilities“, shares Cristina, the telecenter manager. “We teach them how to use the computer and introduce them to [Web 2.0](#), blogs, games and other interactive features of the web.”

With the inclusion of such a program among the telecenter's services to the community, PWDs are given the importance and respect that they deserve. And, somehow, they are made to feel that they are after all a part of the community.

This makes for a very good example of using telecenters as a channel to reach out to PWDs.

I salute the men and women behind Red Omnia and Fundació Esplai. They are, indeed, unsung heroes of the telecenter community.