

Corporate commitment and the social inclusion of vulnerable adults: From corporate and institutional awareness to brand value and citizen engagement

Compromiso corporativo e inclusión social de adultos vulnerables: De la conciencia empresarial e institucional al valor de marca y la participación ciudadana

Compromisso corporativo e inclusão social de adultos vulneráveis: Da consciência empresarial e institucional ao valor da marca e à participação cidadã

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Abstract

The increasing prominence of ageing and disability in developed societies has led to initiatives that strive to awaken and/or strengthen corporate and institutional commitment to the inclusion of vulnerable adults. To achieve this purpose, negative stereotypes about old age and disability must be eliminated, and the multiple barriers of exclusion that hinder participation by citizen groups affected by such stigmas need to be dismantled as well. Along these lines, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) have promoted regulatory frameworks and corporate initiatives aimed at the integration of the most vulnerable audiences. However, consensus is not always achieved among the private sector, the institutional domain, and citizens in the labour of developing a comprehensive strategy that could lead to the desired condition of full inclusion. Technological innovation and digitisation seem to play a decisive role on the road toward social integration of seniors and people with disabilities, although these social groups are often especially affected by the digital gap that exacerbates their inequality and further limits their sociopolitical participation. This monograph seeks to promote greater knowledge of the different strategic aspects that could enable companies, institutions, and administrative bodies to make further progress toward policies aimed at the complete integration of vulnerable adults in the digital era. Therefore, this work aims to contribute to the design and implementation of comprehensive models that use technology to improve the conditions of these segments of the population from the point of view of a *win-win* situation.

Keywords: Vulnerable adults; Older people; People with disabilities; Inclusion; Corporate social responsibility (CSR); Sustainable development goals (SDGs)

Resumen

La importancia que progresivamente han adquirido el envejecimiento y la discapacidad en las sociedades desarrolladas ha motivado iniciativas que procuran despertar y/o fortalecer el compromiso corporativo e institucional con la inclusión de los adultos vulnerables. Para alcanzar este propósito es imprescindible eliminar los estereotipos negativos sobre la vejez y la discapacidad, así como romper las diferentes barreras de exclusión que frenan la participación ciudadana de colectivos afectados por tales estigmas. En esta línea, los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible (ODS) han impulsado marcos legislativos e iniciativas corporativas encaminadas hacia la inclusión de los públicos más vulnerables. Sin embargo, no siempre existe consonancia entre el sector privado, el ámbito institucional y los ciudadanos para poder desarrollar una estrategia integral que conduzca a la deseada plena inclusión. La innovación tecnológica y la digitalización parecen tener un papel determinante en el camino hacia la integración social de *seniors*

y personas con discapacidad, si bien, estos grupos sociales suelen verse especialmente afectados por brechas digitales que amplifican sus desigualdades y limitan todavía más su participación sociopolítica. Este monográfico busca impulsar un mayor conocimiento sobre los diferentes aspectos estratégicos que permitan a empresas, instituciones y administraciones avanzar en políticas orientadas a la completa integración de los adultos vulnerables en la era digital. De esta forma, se pretende contribuir al diseño y a la implementación de modelos holísticos que, utilizando el valor de la tecnología, mejoren la situación de estos segmentos poblacionales bajo la perspectiva que delinea el *win-win*.

Palabras clave: Adultos vulnerables; Personas mayores; Personas con discapacidad; Inclusión; Responsabilidad social corporativa (RSC); Objetivos de desarrollo sostenible (ODS)

Resumo

A importância crescente do envelhecimento e da deficiência nas sociedades desenvolvidas levou a iniciativas que procuram despertar e/ou reforçar o compromisso empresarial e institucional para a inclusão de adultos vulneráveis. Para atingir este objectivo, é essencial eliminar os estereótipos negativos sobre a velhice e a deficiência, bem como quebrar as várias barreiras de exclusão que impedem a participação de grupos afectados por tais estigmas. Nesta linha, os Objectivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS) promoveram quadros regulamentares e iniciativas empresariais que visam a inclusão dos públicos mais vulneráveis. Contudo, nem sempre há alinhamento entre o sector privado, a esfera institucional e os cidadãos, a fim de desenvolver uma estratégia abrangente que conduza à desejada inclusão plena. A inovação tecnológica e a digitalização parecem desempenhar um papel decisivo no caminho para a integração social de idosos e de pessoas com deficiência, embora estes grupos sociais sejam frequentemente afetados pelas clivagens digitais que amplificam as suas desigualdades e limitam ainda mais a sua participação sociopolítica. Esta edição especial procura promover um maior conhecimento dos diferentes aspectos estratégicos que permitem às empresas, instituições e administrações avançarem nas políticas que visam a integração total de adultos vulneráveis na era digital. Desta forma, pretende contribuir para a conceção e implementação de modelos holísticos que, utilizando o valor da tecnologia, melhorem a situação destes segmentos da população apresentando uma perspectiva vantajosa para todos.

Palavras-chave: Adultos vulneráveis; Idosos; Pessoas com deficiência; Inclusão; Responsabilidade social das empresas (RSE); Objetivos de desenvolvimento sustentável (ODS)

1. Introduction

The growing concern for sustainability has generally increased the interest in the social inclusion of vulnerable adults. Moreover, businesses, institutions, and administrations play a key role in this endeavour. In the institutional realm, Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) have driven the implementation of corporate and governmental policies aimed at achieving social sustainability through the true inclusion of all people (United Nations, 2015). However, the coordination required between the private and public sectors is not always present for the purpose of developing a strategy that could lead to the full inclusion of the most vulnerable segment of the population.

Companies are increasingly contributing to the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the planet (Chimhowu et al., 2019; Horner, 2020), while at the same time trying to enhance their reputation (Khan et al., 2019; Llorente-Barroso, et al., 2022; Miethlich & Oldenburg, 2020). In 21st century corporate narratives, inclusion has become a leading player, although this might blur the true commitment of the business world both to its development (Olwig, 2021) and to vulnerable adults. Apart from legislation and economic incentives (Al-Kerdawy, 2019; Fasciglione, 2015; Paramio-Salcines & Kitchin, 2013), or the positive image that drives companies to design and implement inclusion strategies (Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022; Segovia-San-Juan et al., 2017), comprehensive approaches that encourage the involvement of all agents, including public, private, and citizens (Butt et al., 2022), must also be considered in order to achieve the social inclusion of all people.

Faced with the challenge of preventing the exclusion of those who are most vulnerable, technological innovation and digitisation are key instruments in helping companies and administrations implement measures that improve their interaction with the most disadvantaged groups. However, despite the vast potential offered by technology in fostering social inclusion, both seniors and people with disabilities are often especially affected by first and second-level digital divides (Hargittai, 2002, 2003; Van-Deursen & Helsper, 2015b, 2018; Van-Deursen & Van-Dijk, 2014, 2015). Such gaps exacerbate their inequality compared to that of other citizens (Mihelj et al., 2019), thereby limiting their political and social participation (Ferrucci et al., 2020; Gilbert, 2010). Thus, it is crucial to carry out research that analyses the potential of companies and institutions to enhance the inclusion of vulnerable adults through social sustainability policies by considering both the opportunities and constraints posed by digitisation and technological innovation. This is an ethical obligation, which also encourages potential links between companies, institutions, and audiences, under the umbrella of a win-win situation.

2. Social challenges linked to old age and disability

The increased life expectancy of people with disabilities (Molton & Ordway, 2019), as well as the onset of disabilities that appear at advanced ages (Ansello & Eustis, 1992; Beedon, 1992; Campbell & Putnam, 2017; Lutz & Scherbov, 2005), are two phenomena that have led to an exponential increase in the number of older people with such impairments (Markides & Rote, 2014). This situation poses new sustainability challenges with socio-

economic implications for addressing dependency (Cès et al., 2021; Trip et al., 2020) and removing barriers to participation faced by older adults (Mitzner et al., 2018).

People who age with a simultaneous disability must face a process of change that impacts their own identity and forces them to develop adaptation strategies that vary according to each individual, thereby influencing their life (Petretto & Pili, 2022). Contextual and personal factors are decisive in securing their opportunities for well-being, participation, health, autonomy, and independence (Petretto & Pili, 2022; Yeung & Breheny, 2021). In general, people with disabilities face barriers that prevent their integration in all areas of life and limit the exercise of their rights as citizens (Sánchez-Valle, Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022).

To avoid the exclusion of vulnerable adults, it is necessary to eliminate the stigmas and negative stereotypes that haunt them. Traditionally, seniors and people with disabilities have been socially and psychologically stigmatised (Beedon, 1992; Pili et al., 2018; Van-Der-Horst & Vickerstaff, 2021), an image that the media have fomented by associating these groups with negative stereotypes (Fraser & Llewellyn, 2015; Holton et al., 2014; Schnell, 2017; Tsatsou, 2020; Viñarás-Abad et al., 2021; Xu, 2022). This adverse portrayal can be counteracted by flexible approaches in order to create a new concept of ageing and disability in the 21st century. The new media can offer visibility to these social groups, thereby fostering approaches that might help alleviate the fear among citizens engendered by ageing and disability (Beedon, 1992). Moreover, responsible communication by the aforementioned media would help users accept a lifestyle with the limitations inherent to each moment of life (Beedon, 1992). From this viewpoint, an adaptation of technological devices to the unique features of these vulnerable groups is also required (Sánchez-Valle, Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022; Tsatsou, 2020; Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022).

3. Corporate and institutional commitment to vulnerable adults

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) allows companies to actively contribute to the public good, thereby providing social benefits to citizens (Williams, 2019), as well as an economic return to the company itself (Köseoglu et al., 2021). On many occasions, enhancing reputation is the impetus for the business sector to propose CSR policies, yet its true commitment to society is not always seen (Hwang et al., 2020; Miethlich & Oldenburg, 2020). This approach by some companies suggests that the social aspect of CSR needs further development and refinement, especially regarding proposals related to ageing and disability (Loosemore et al., 2018).

Governments and public administrations play a key role in encouraging companies to create policies of corporate social sustainability. They can also provide incentives in the form of subsidies and/or regulatory frameworks that foster this type of corporate policy (Al-Kerdawy, 2019). Among the government initiatives aimed at encouraging corporate

measures that promote inclusion and diversity, the 2030 Agenda stands out. This is a collection of rules drawn up by the United Nations General Assembly, the goal of which is to achieve 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015). However, advances in multilevel governance have prioritised health care measures for ageing and disability, which has worked to the detriment of other strategies for achieving the true social inclusion of these groups (Dickson, 2022).

3.1. Ageing as a source of opportunity

The ageing of the world's population is being driven by increasing longevity (United Nations, 2019; WHO, 2021). This requires cross-sectoral approaches (Heinze & Naegele, 2012) in order to improve the inclusion of seniors with the help of social, economic, and cultural measures. Against this backdrop, the silver economy is trying to establish a positive perception of ageing (Rogelj & Bogataj, 2019), by portraying it as a driving force of change in fostering social innovation, thereby leading to enhanced quality of life, economic participation, and the social inclusion of ageing people (Butt et al., 2021).

The silver economy has already become the third largest economic unit in the world, and the one that offers the most opportunities in the private and public sectors (Zsarnoczky, 2016). In Europe, the silver economy has been committed to technological innovation that aims to make the daily life of older adults easier (Butt et al., 2021). However, in order for the silver economy to become a path to real growth, profound changes must be undertaken that are cultural, social, and political in nature (Gordon, 2017).

3.2. Social sustainability policies related to disability

The practice of hiring people with disabilities has been integrated into the inclusion and diversity initiatives of CSR (Fasciglione, 2015; Köseoglu et al., 2021; Meacham et al., 2019; Miethlich & Oldenburg, 2020). However, the impetus for corporate responsibility aimed at disability is also the result of a legal framework that served as a wake-up call at the beginning of the 21st century, which led to a small number of corporate initiatives in this regard (Dibben et al., 2002). Thus, in response to these regulations (Paramio-Salcines & Kitchin, 2013), corporations have been required to make a growing commitment to implementing measures that address the rights of the most vulnerable groups (Fasciglione, 2015). Despite the progress made and the greater involvement of large companies in employing people with disabilities, some corporate initiatives continue to respond more to complying with various existing laws or achieving a good corporate image than to expressing a true corporate commitment to the inclusion of this group in the labour market (Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022; Segovia-San-Juan et al., 2017).

People with disabilities continue to face multiple barriers that hinder their access to the work force and contribute to their social exclusion (Joshi & Thomas, 2019; Khan et al., 2019; Sánchez-Valle, Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022). These barriers need to be removed, as a person with a disability who is gainfully employed enjoys greater autonomy and independence, feels useful, and has higher self-esteem (Chen et al., 2012; McKinney & Swartz, 2019).

Largely due to prejudice and stigma (Islam & Patwary, 2013; Viñarás-Abad et al., 2021), employers are missing the opportunity to benefit from a group that stands out for its loyalty. Moreover, these people can have a positive impact on the reputation and productivity of the companies for which they work (Fasciglione, 2015; Miethlich & Oldenburg, 2020). Therefore, diversity and inclusion policies must be redefined according to social sustainability objectives (Khan et al., 2019; Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022). Furthermore, companies must be committed to ensuring equality among all their employees by implementing hiring practices that avoid discrimination and promote the diversity and inclusion of their staff (Ellinger et al., 2020; Joshi & Thomas, 2019). This fundamental precept requires the implementation of an inclusive corporate culture that will combat the stigma of disability in the workplace (Ellinger et al., 2020; Fasciglione, 2015; Islam & Patwary, 2013), bolstered by training for all employees (Nelissen et al., 2016; Volker, 2013). Only in this way can society achieve the mainstreaming of disability (Pérez-Conesa et al., 2020), which can inspire an inclusive attitude (Bengisu & Balta, 2010; Kwan, 2020).

4. The role of digitisation in the inclusion of vulnerable adults

During the last decade of the 20th century, the first research to address what is known as the *first-level digital gap* emerged, which identified inequalities between people with and without access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), according to whether or not they had the means of connecting to the Internet (Hargittai, 2002, 2003; Van-Deursen & Van-Dijk, 2015, 2019). Nowadays, as the Internet has become nearly universally available in developed countries, the focus of experts in this field is on identifying divergences in the degree of digital skills and the ways in which ICT is used. In this regard, there is evidence of a *second-level digital gap* that even affects people with purchasing power (Hargittai, 2002, 2003; Van-Deursen & Van-Dijk, 2014, 2015). Finally, a third-level digital gap has also been observed, revealing a disparity in the obtainment of various benefits (personal, economic, social, and cultural), which result from people's actual use of ICT (Van-Deursen & Helsper, 2015b, 2018).

In general, both age and disability are factors that negatively affect digital capital (Ragnedda et al., 2020). Consequently, older adults and people with disabilities are often affected by digital gaps at all three levels, although second and third-level digital divides are the most prevalent among these social groups in developed countries. Such gaps can exacerbate pre-existing inequalities that many vulnerable citizens already confront (Mihelj

et al., 2019), thereby limiting their participation in social and political decisions (Ferrucci et al., 2020; Gilbert, 2010). Therefore, it is important to exploit the potential of digitisation in order to achieve the inclusion of vulnerable adults, thereby avoiding their social exclusion as a result of such gaps.

4.1. The value of technology and digital resources for seniors

A number of studies have pointed to the potential of ICT in promoting independent, active, and inclusive ageing (González-Oñate et al., 2015; Llorente-Barroso et al., 2021; Shapira et al., 2007; Tirado-Morueta et al., 2016). In this regard, digitisation has helped to improve the personal and social status of older adults by empowering them and providing tangible benefits in different areas of their lives (Van-Deursen & Helsper, 2018).

European policies have sought to maximise the transforming potential of its digital marketplace, implementing joint actions among member countries to optimise the benefits that technological innovation can offer to the senior population (Banks, 2017; Butt et al., 2021). In the silver economy, the success of digital platforms and other ICT resources for older adults depends on the collaboration of the sectors involved (companies, administrations, and academic institutions), as well as the end-consumer (Butt et al., 2022). At the present time, however, barriers continue to exist, which slows down the implementation and/or development of technologically innovative solutions and business models aimed at achieving a realistic approach that prioritises the needs of senior users (Cornet, 2015; Gordon, 2017). For example, neither e-government nor e-commerce have been capable of responding to the specific needs of the different profiles of older adults as citizens (Sánchez-Valle, Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022) and consumers (Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022), which requires a reflection on their digital accessibility and policies of inclusion.

Despite the difficulties, the senior population shows a positive attitude toward ICT, recognising the socio-emotional benefits they provide (Llorente-Barroso et al., 2021). As a result, many older adults are open to accepting technologically innovative solutions that offer them benefits as they age (Barska & Śnihur, 2017). Nevertheless, ICT resources aimed at helping older adults to lead healthy lives is encountering certain resistance among those with low levels of digital skill (Butt et al., 2021). Still another reason why older people are rejecting certain assistive technologies is the image they want to project of themselves. The desire shared by many seniors to appear young, independent, and competent could be encouraging them to reject certain devices that might actually enhance their well-being and/or social participation (Astell et al., 2020). Therefore, it is essential to identify the priorities and desires of older adults in order to provide them with technological offers that are truly useful for their lives, which incorporate therapeutically entertaining options that contribute to their personal growth, civic participation, and quality of life (Ansello & Eustis, 1992; Astell et al., 2020; Cornet, 2015).

As part of the OSIRIS project, the *Digital Silver Hub* was created as a collaborative digital platform for promoting knowledge-sharing and the co-creation of innovative technological resources for improving the quality of life of seniors (Butt et al., 2022). Along the same lines, *TechSAge* is a programme that fosters senior-friendly redesign (Mitzner et al., 2018), and *AgeTech* offers digital media to keep older people connected through community and health services (Sixsmith, 2020).

Regardless of demographic and socio-cultural characteristics, the level of digital skills of older adults and the online activities they carry out can bring them social, economic, cultural, and personal benefits (Van-Deursen & Helsper, 2018). However, online tasks that have a crucial effect on seniors' offline lives, such as the use of public services, require more technological expertise than simple everyday activities (Sánchez-Valle, Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022; Van-Deursen & Helsper, 2015a; Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022).

Generally speaking, the use of social media improves the social capital of older people (Hsu et al., 2021; O'Brien et al., 2021; Yu, 2020; Yu et al., 2018), as it positively impacts their independence and well-being (Jones et al., 2015; Llorente-Barroso et al., 2021; Simons et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). From the perspective of citizenship, social networks allow the senior population to exchange ideas within a virtual community (Xu, 2022). Initiatives such as miOne, which is based on the way that social platforms function, try to support older adults in making the most of ICT and encouraging them to participate in social and cultural programmes (Ferreira & Veloso, 2019).

4.2. The digital inclusion of people with disabilities in order to prevent their social exclusion

The digital inclusion of people with disabilities is one of the social instruments being used in the struggle to prevent their exclusion (Lin et al., 2018). Indeed, in terms of social justice, access to the Internet is one of the keys to achieving social participation for people with disabilities (Jaeger, 2012). The digital realm enables them to have relations with administrations, institutions, and governments (Sylvester & McGlynn, 2010), thereby shaping their economic, social and political participation (Williams, 2019). Therefore, access to online urban services by people with disabilities is one of the major challenges facing ethical and responsible governance (Kolotouchkina et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the socialising role played by social media enables people with disabilities to exercise their right to civic participation in decision-making, which affects the society in which they live (Lord et al., 2014). By developing skills related to the social, digital, and citizenly realms that are enabled by these online spaces (Lin et al., 2018), people with disabilities can maximise their sense of belonging to a community (Lord et al., 2014).

From a governmental perspective, stronger leadership in digital accessibility could produce a developmental shift toward inclusive cities governed by a barrier-free digital urban logic (Kolotouchkina et al., 2022). However, administrations and businesses do not always foster accessible digital environments, and people with disabilities continue to face significant barriers in the online world (Hussain et al., 2015; Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022; Oh & Chen, 2015). In this regard, some research has highlighted the need to raise awareness among businesses to improve the accessibility of their online designs as part of their CSR commitment (Hussain et al., 2015; Oh & Chen, 2015).

5. Conclusions and discussion

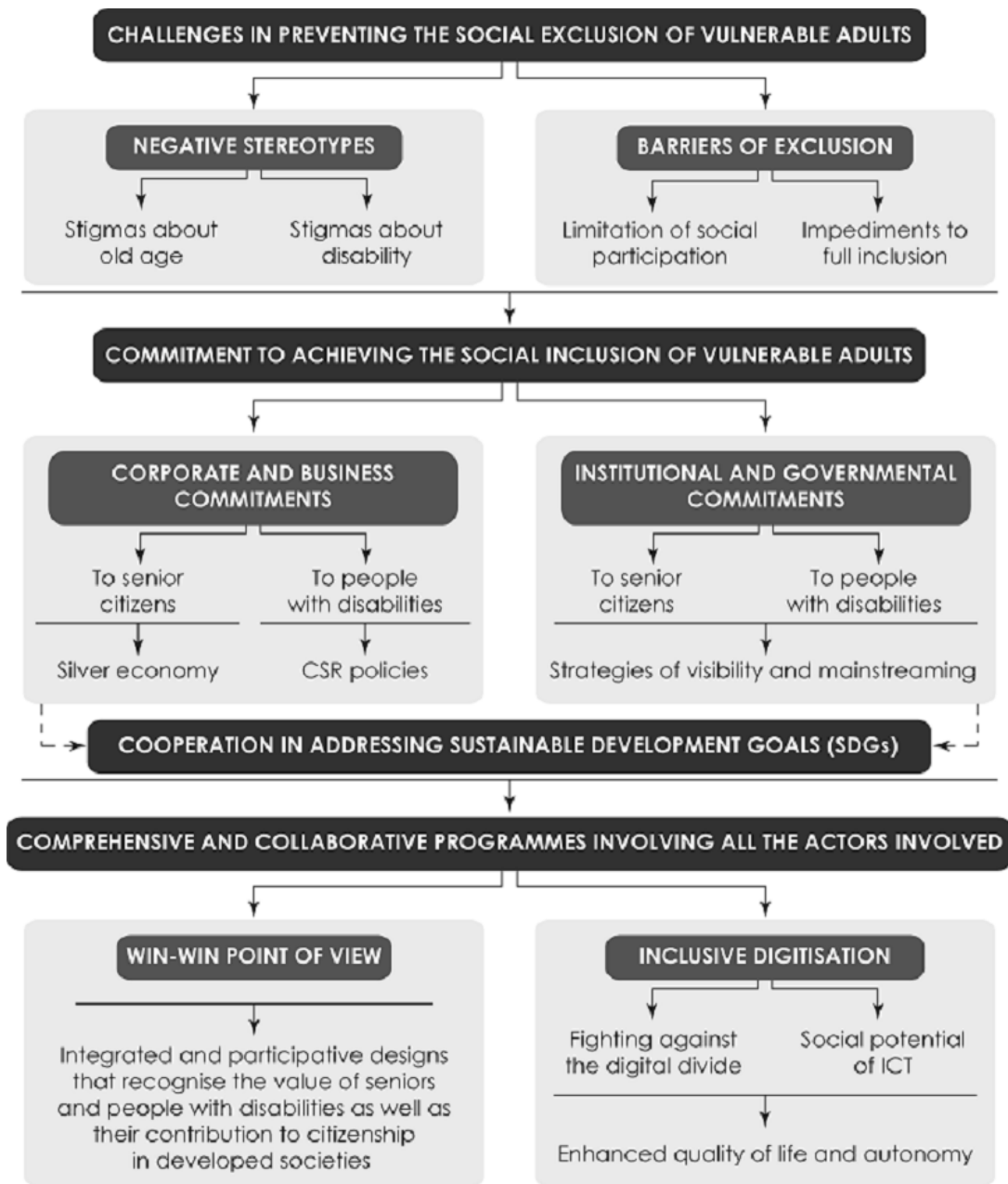
With increasing numbers of older people experiencing disabilities associated with their stage of life (Ansello & Eustis, 1992; Beedon, 1992; Campbell & Putnam, 2017; Lutz & Scherbov, 2005), one of the major challenges facing society today is overcoming the stigma of ageing, which is related to the struggle to achieve the full inclusion of vulnerable adults (Gordon, 2017) and disability (Beedon, 1992; Pili et al., 2018; Schnell, 2017; Van-Der-Horst & Vickerstaff, 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to support these groups in this transition so that they can make adjustments that will allow them to adapt their lives to their situation (Petretto & Pili, 2022). Moreover, it is essential for the system to make an effort to eliminate the diverse barriers of exclusion that limit their participation as citizens, and consequently act as an obstruction to exercising their rights (Sánchez-Valle, Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022). The media play a decisive role in this task, as they must inspire a positive perception that will help make ageing and disability more visible and mainstream by abandoning traditional approaches that have fomented the spread of stereotypical stigmas (Beedon, 1992; Fraser & Llewellyn, 2015; Holton et al., 2014; Sánchez-Valle, Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022; Tsatsou, 2020; Viñarás-Abad et al., 2021; Xu, 2022).

The regulatory framework designed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) has prompted governments to develop economic and legal incentives to encourage business initiatives committed to social sustainability (Al-Kerdawy, 2019). However, in order to address the specific needs of the older population, cross-sectoral policy approaches are needed (Heinze & Naegele, 2012), which could foster a view of ageing as productive (Rogelj & Bogataj, 2019) in the context of the silver economy, and could increase the value of the work carried out by older people in society. Along the same lines, corporate and governmental strategies that go beyond current legislation (Fasciglione, 2015; Paramio-Salcines & Kitchin, 2013), and even further than the promotion of corporate reputation, are needed in order to encourage the inclusion of people with disabilities (Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022; Segovia-San-Juan et al., 2017), by recognising their personal and professional potential (Fasciglione, 2015; Miethlich & Oldenburg, 2020). To do so, companies must implement a corporate culture that is inclusive (Ellinger et al., 2020; Islam & Patwary, 2013) and oriented toward social sustainability goals (Khan et al., 2019; Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022).

In Europe, proposals have been set forth that take advantage of the transforming capability of digitisation in providing technological innovation that benefits the life quality of older adults (Banks, 2017; Butt et al., 2021), as well as their active and independent ageing (González-Oñate et al., 2015; Llorente-Barroso et al., 2021; Shapira et al., 2007; Tirado-Morueta et al., 2016). However, the success of these digital resources depends on the involvement of businesses, institutions, academia, and consumers (Butt et al., 2022), who must collaborate jointly in designing proposals that prioritise the needs of seniors (Cornet, 2015; Gordon, 2017). Thus, a review of current models of e-government and e-commerce is needed in order to adapt them to the accessibility needs of the different profiles of older adults (Sánchez-Valle, Llorente-Barroso et al., 2022; Viñarás-Abad et al., 2022). In this process of updating and developing technologically innovative resources for seniors, the involvement of the older people themselves is essential in order to guarantee that they will accept them as accessible and truly useful (Butt et al., 2022; Ansello & Eustis, 1992; Astell et al., 2020; Hsu et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2015; Llorente-Barroso et al., 2021; O'Brien et al., 2021; Simons et al., 2021; Yu, 2020; Yu et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2021). Likewise, ICT has been established as an essential tool for the inclusion of people with disabilities (Lin et al., 2018), enabling their participation in society (Jaeger, 2012; Lord et al., 2014; Williams, 2019), and allowing them to connect with public administrations and governments (Sylvester & McGlynn, 2010). Consequently, governmental systems must prioritise accessibility to online urban services in order to ensure the digital participation of people with disabilities (Kolotouchkina et al., 2022), and to enhance their sense of belonging to the community (Lord et al., 2014). In this communal commitment to reducing the digital gap and promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities, companies should make an effort to optimise accessibility to their online environments as part of their CSR strategy (Hussain et al., 2015; Oh & Chen, 2015).

Figure 1 summarises the reflections set forth in this article, which are an attempt to encourage research from different fields. The purpose would be to delve deeper into the lines of thought indicated in the figure, in order to inspire progress toward the full inclusion of vulnerable adults in developed societies.

Figure 1. Outline of reflections on the role of corporate and institutional engagement in achieving the social inclusion of vulnerable adults in the digital age



Source: Created by the authors.

Authors' contribution

Carmen Llorente-Barroso: Conceptualization, Investigation, Supervision, Writing-original draft and writing-review and editing. **João Luis Anzanello Carrascoza:**

Conceptualization, Investigation, Supervision, Writing- original draft and Writing- review and editing. **Ivone Ferreira:** Conceptualization, Investigation, Supervision, Writing-original draft and Writing-review and editing. All authors have read and are in full agreement with the published version of the manuscript. Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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