

Mobiliar Center for Resilience

Project Period 2024 - 2026

Well-being and resilience of people with disabilities – Legal, psychological and computer science perspectives concerning access to information and digitalization

Executive summary

Digital technologies offer considerable opportunities for persons with disabilities while simultaneously revealing persistent structural, legal, and informational barriers that impede full participation and well-being. Globally, approximately 16% of the population lives with a disability — a proportion that continues to rise due to ageing and chronic illness. In Switzerland, nearly one in five individuals identifies as disabled, with physical impairments being most prevalent. This interdisciplinary research project examines well-being and resilience among people with disabilities through converging legal, psychological, and computer science perspectives, with a particular focus on access to information and digitalisation.

From a psychological and technological standpoint, empirical findings revealed marked disparities in well-being across disability types. Individuals with sensorial or physical disabilities benefit more readily from technological support and proactive civil society initiatives, whereas those with psychological or mental disabilities face more acute information gaps and greater societal exclusion. Internet-based resources have emerged as the primary — and most trusted — source for health and legal information, yet current digital infrastructures consistently fall short of meeting the diverse informational needs of many groups. Addressing these gaps has been identified as a pathway toward empowerment, autonomy and resilience.

From a legal perspective, the analysis traced the evolution of Swiss disability law through the framework of international human rights law, with particular emphasis on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Key domestic legal developments on the equality and non-discrimination of people with disabilities are situated within a broader paradigm shift from medical and social models toward a human rights-based approach. In Switzerland, despite a robust constitutional foundation, persistent gaps remain:

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fragmented federal-cantonal implementation, a limited scope of anti-discrimination provisions, insufficient recognition of reasonable accommodation, and ongoing barriers to digital inclusion and meaningful participation.

Integrating these perspectives, the project maintained that realising disability rights and promoting well-being require not only legislative reform but also coordinated structural/social transformation. This encompasses the design of inclusive digital infrastructures, the establishment of accessible and reliable online resources — particularly for those with invisible disabilities — and the meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities and their organisations in driving change. An interdisciplinary approach is essential to developing effective guidelines, fostering empowerment, and building genuinely inclusive digital and legal environments.

Research Team

*Prof. Martin-Sölch Chantal, Prof. Progin-Theuerkauf Sarah, Prof. Portmann Edy,
Dr. Auray Isabelle, Dr. Papinutto Michael, Dr. Raimondo Giulia*

Impact and Outcomes

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Scientific Articles

- ‘Information accessibility and needs in persons with disabilities’ submitted to ALTER in May 2026
- ‘From Reporting to Reform: New Developments in Disability Rights in Switzerland’ submitted to the Swiss Review of International and European Law in April 2026.

Conferences and Seminars (in addition to internal seminars)

- *Reduced perceived well-being of persons with mental disabilities and association with digital information accessibility*, Poster presentation at EACLIPT 2025 – Frankfurt, Germany – May 28-30, 2025
- Alexandre Jollien : *Vivre en situation de handicap. Comment trouver la joie au quotidien et bâtir une société plus libre ?*, 4 November 2025
- Prof. Dr. iur. Markus Schefer : *Inclusion as a Human Right – The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 31 March 2026

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Teaching activities (general or specialized audiences)

- *supervision of four students for their bachelor's 2) and master's 2 theses*

Non-Academic Outreach

Knowledge transfer to partners outside the university (please highlight transfer events for Mobiliar)

- Several meetings for a MobiCase analysis with XPERT Center AG and Mobilière Suisse Société assurances SA
- Meeting to present our preliminary results with Nicolas Robert, Director of the DI Office of Fribourg
- Meeting to present our preliminary results with Adrienne Berger, disability affairs officer at the Department of Health and Social Affairs (DSAS)

External training

Media coverage

Interview of Chantal Martin-Soelch for "Vacarme" a RTS Première documentary program (published end of May)