

HDME: MULTIDIMENSIONAL DIAGNOSIS TOOL OF EXCLUSION (HDME).

The **concept of social exclusion** is characterised by its **dynamic multidimensional character**, in which different elements intervene with a *varied nature*. These characteristics make it necessary to analyse the whole *process of exclusion* and how the variables influence it, as well as *the trajectory* that the individual follows in that process.

Analysing the concept in an abstract way, direct or simple cause-effect relations between factors and exclusion must be dismissed. There are multiple factors that intervene (*accumulative, changing and interrelated factors*) and cause individual positional changes in the process.

So, when addressing the relevant causes for this process, we should use the term “**associated factor**”; it is, factors that allow us to create a series of initial hypothesis regarding how a risk cause may affect the process of exclusion. Once this initial hypothesis is formulated, what comes next is to put it to test, providing evidences about its acceptability. In this way, professional intervention in social services should be focused on **analysing that situation and examining the risks that individuals face**. That intervention must be done taking into account that the process is under the influence of the kind of intervention offered: assistance intervention results are not the same as **preventive intervention** ones. While the first one puts its focus on stopping the risks or causes, preventive one reverts the process towards a situation of inclusion, creating protective factors that avoid coming back to the starting point.

What is HDME? (Herramienta de Diagnóstico Multidimensional de la Exclusión – Multidimensional Diagnosis Tool of Exclusion).

Under these assumptions, **HDME** is created as a useful tool for the professionals’ interventions because it allows, on the one hand, to **systematize the risks and the individual’s position** in the process of exclusion and, on the other hand, to **orientate the intervention plan’s decisions**.

Who is it addressed to?

HDME is addressed to **social services professionals**, facilitating their approach to an individual case by offering the possibility of conducting a deeper analysis *of the causes*. Therefore, HDME is not a tool created for the sociologic group analysis, nor as a scale that allows the access to

certain social services.

How is it created?



In the first place, **factors associated to exclusion** have been detected (concretely, 62) from experts' contributions in this field.

E.g. of associated factors: the access to minimum incomes, the environment where he lives- whether rural or urban, if he has enough labour training, his self-determination facing external/internal challenges, etc.

Secondly, these factors are included in one of the dimensions concerning a person's life. Six dimensions have been identified: monetary/economic, housing and environment, employment, health, personal capital and relational capital.

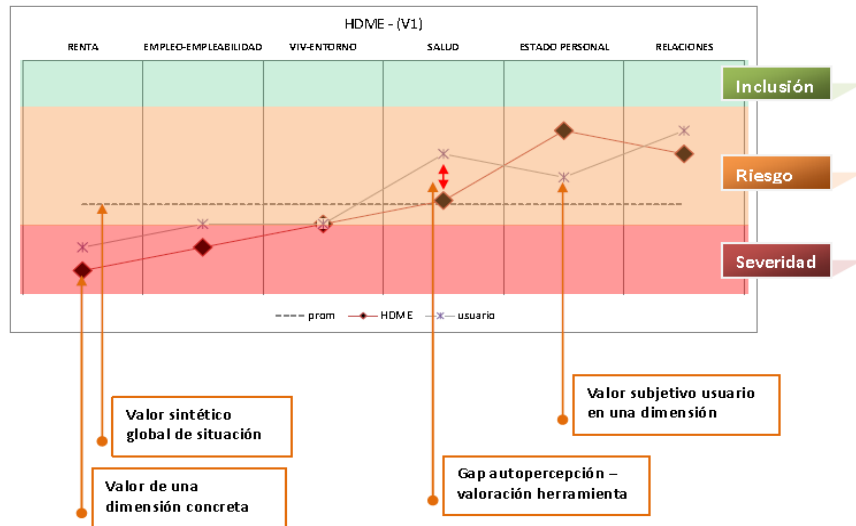
Following our example, the access to the minimum income is included in the monetary dimension, the environment where he lives influences housing dimension, his labour training affects to his employment, etc.

After that, 14 **indicators** for measuring these dimensions have been generated. They take into account what we call "**structural factors**" (age, gender, individual's legal situation and culture or ethnic group) as they influence transversely all the dimensions. From these indicators, the tool elaborates a **synthetic index** that allows, finally, a **graphic representation** of the global situation.

How does it work?

During the first interview between professionals and participants, the individual should answer to some predetermined questions embedded in the computer programme. Depending on the answers that are obtained, the tool scores that dimension (e.g. in the employment dimension, if the answer given by the professional –after the interview- to the question "does the individual have real chances to get into the labour market?" is "yes", and to the question "is he motivated enough for that?" the answer is "no", the computer programme qualifies that situation as "*hard employability situation in the short-term*"). Once the computer programme crosses all the answers with all the questions in each dimension, it proposes possible

alternatives to solve that situation and gives a mark classification from 1 to 10 to each dimension.



Finally, the global score is obtained by mixing all the dimension scores and taking into account structural factors. The computer programme prints two copies of the results: one for the professional and one for the individual, with recommendations and suggestions.

How are the results interpreted?

Among its multiple uses, stands out the possibility of **determining the gap** between the perception that the professional perceives and the individual's self-perception (if it is realistic or needs to be improved). This is one of the advantages of doing an intervention by an **appreciative approach**: the diagnosis is obtained by the participant –and not by the professional-, allowing to **focus on potentialities** instead of weaknesses, **empowering the individual to take control of his life plan**.