



Country Review Reports

ENABLE –

Enhancing Employability Skills
of Persons with Disabilities

www.enable-project.org

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List of abbreviations:

CSO – *Civil society organisation*

HR – *Human resources(s)*

IO - *Intellectual output*

MHP – *Mental health problems*

PMD – *People with mental disorders*

PMHP – *People with mental health problems*

PWD – *Persons with disabilities*



INTRODUCTION

The present document represents the first output of the Erasmus+ granted project named ENABLE - Enhancing Employability Skills of Persons with Disabilities.

The project underpins the connection of the full inclusion of PWD in in the labour market and society in general, whereby the latter is based on such activation of the target group that includes all means of activating and empowering them to fully express their gifts for a free and autonomous life, to share their knowledge within respective surrounding communities and thus contributes to overcoming, reducing and preventing any prejudices that still are present nowadays. The project itself tackles:

- problem areas such as: participation, accessibility, equality, employment, education, and training of PWD,
- Inclusion in the job market as a central concern,
- Importance of self-activation as the catalysts to increase the role of PWD in the society,
- researching all options for a full expression of individual gifts/talents of PWD to live a free and autonomous (working) life.

The target groups of the project, important also for understating this IO, can be seen from at least two viewpoints and are representing the triangle of different individuals and/or organisations that are important for the workflow of the project itself (PWD, organisations working with/for PWD, stakeholders). For this IO, the main target groups were:

- Organisations (public and private sector, civil society organisations) working directly or indirectly with PWD and/or PMHP/PMD.

Different EU strategic documents, national regulations and statistical data is quite clear – discrimination, prejudice, and lack of full participation in the working life is still present. Therefore, the project consortium researched main challenges for a full participation of PWD in the society within the following activities:

- Desktop research on general national data and situation in the countries of the project consortium.
- On-line survey, reflecting the nature of the gathered data in national contexts.
- Focus groups as targeted events for reflecting the question of inclusion and appearance of participatory methods/approaches/activities.



- Interviews with professionals to reflect on current approaches and needs analysis for the future project results.

Information, gathered in this IO therefore serves as foundation for future results of project - within the latter, this IO therefore tried to promote needs analysis of the primary target group (PWD) within other work packages:

- Capacity building programme (needs of PWD based on current situation).
- Empowerment (Developing tools for full engagement in local and national communities).
- Engagement (awareness campaign, aimed to create a counter-narrative on the role and skills of people affected by disabilities).
- Promotion in the society (Outreach to stakeholders/awareness raising and promotion of the project).

Within this IO, chapter 1 is mainly concentrated around the research methodology and research approach; chapter 2 is dedicated to interpretation of gathered data and presentation of research results; Chapter 3 discusses the results and gives some useful recommendations about how to consider results for future activities of the project.

Key words: inclusion, disabilities, labour market, discrimination, human resource, ICT, support

1 THE RESEARCH AND COUNTRY PROFILES

The general aim of the research was to gather information about current situation in the consortium countries about inclusion of PWD with respect to current situation and regulative background and/or national framework addressing PWD. The results of the research are gathered as country specific review gathering experienced feedback and opinion from organisations and professionals working with PWD (national and local associations, Institutions, CSO's, etc.) about current situation in the respective countries (employment, inclusion, job market regulations, good practice examples, potential prejudice, etc.). This chapter is specifically aimed at explaining the research background and most important elements of research area along with formulating aims and objectives, defined research questions and data gathering approach.

1.1 Aim of the research and methodological approach

The general aim of the research is to gather information for country profiling and reporting about the general state of the art within the wide field of addressing the topic about inclusion of PWD (employment, education, communities) thus to explore more in-depth about what is already functioning well, what is missing and what are the needs of target groups in consortium countries for future implementation of the project contributing to other results (needs analysis).

Research objectives, defined by the consortium, comprise several steps that address HOW the research aim was achieved; we are hereby stating the most important steps taken:

- preliminary short desktop research in each country to define final research questions for a country context report,
- consensus on central research question(s) to be answered based on preliminary research findings (imperative of integration of PWD into social, economic, and political aspects) that would be applicable for each of the partner country,
- implementation of on-line survey, focus group interventions and individual interviews.

Also, a clear overview of project's target groups was prepared to achieve a maximum impact for future activities (stakeholders and community mapping). The central target group includes PWD/PMHP and as defined in the project description itself as PMD. The consortium consists of different professionals working with PWD so the distinction what we are researching on, needed a consensus of addressing both correct formulations and definition of PWD,



respecting different communities the partners work with and communicating this understanding also to target group, participating in the research (professionals).

The first step was to clearly understand distinction between several terms underpinning:

- understanding of project's vulnerable target groups (PWD/PMHP/PMD)
- worldwide accepted consensus of the terms,
- understanding of target groups, project partners work directly or indirectly.

Going on from the WHO definition¹, disabilities are to be understood as an umbrella term that include entities such as "impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions«. They are not to be understood only as a health problem, but much more and rather as complex phenomenon to be understood in the relation between »features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives in« (ibidem).

In the addition to the above mentioned, the term mental disorder also includes a wide range of problems, including different symptoms². WHO describes them as characterized "by some combination of abnormal thoughts, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others". According to the free dictionary by Farlex³ (serving as meta database of different on-line dictionaries including medical terms and definitions) it is considered i.e also as "a psychological syndrome or behavioural pattern associated with either subjective distress or objective impairment". The latter includes also developmental disability (arising before adulthood), intellectual and learning disability. The term itself can also refer to emotional and behavioural disorder.⁴

The methodology and the research design used within this IO can be described as predominantly qualitative. Data was mostly collected from reliable on-line resources presenting i.e. national statistics (quantitative data), informative and subject/topic specific websites, data from specialized organisations, on-line directories of national legislation, website articles, known and on-line best practice examples within the work scope of project partners and other (Research Methodology, 2020). The available data was analysed within the scope of research questions, predefined and designed by the partnership as most important aspects to be looked at and presented in the next chapter (1.2). Research was conducted with use of the following steps:

- Desktop research of national situation based on preliminary research of the most important action points (disability and national regulations, trainings, needs analysis of the target group)
- On-line survey
- Interviews among professionals
- Focus groups



Target groups reached within these steps were primarily professionals working directly and/or indirectly with PWD/PMHP/PMD.

1.2 Research questions

Differentiating between complex terminology the consortium once again shared more in-depth information of the target groups (PWD/PMHP they work with daily, also including information about current networks and communities, directly or indirectly connected to their scope of work. Afterwards, each country researched on existing data and current open issues in their respective countries that are connected to the rationale of the projects general objective (inclusion) and from the viewpoint of other work packages. With this preliminary search of data, the consortium developed, checked, and finalized a set of questions, pertinent to the 3-stage data gathering (country specific) for:

- In depth desktop research for country specifics
- On-line survey
- Interviews and focus groups

In depth desktop research for country specifics included the following set of questions:

1) *Legislative background/national regulations dealing with the topic of PMD/PWD*

Description of national legislation / regulation in the field of disability in general and more specifically for the age group; main national job inclusion framework today available in the target countries.

1. Main national job inclusion framework:

- 1.1. *What are the regulations addressing?*
- 1.2. *How is the national regulation connected to questions of employability/special trainings/state support for enhancement of employability?*
- 1.3. *How is national legislation promoting equal employment opportunities of the target group?*
- 1.4. *Are there any data available on retraining/employment retraining possibilities for the target group – formal and non-formal initiatives, nature of employment/job conditions of PMD/PWD etc.?’*
- 1.5. *What is the level/nature of inclusion into labour market – working time/benefits/support from HR departments?*
- 1.6. *What are the main obstacles for labour market inclusion in practice?*
- 1.7. *What are the main field/sectors/concrete sectoral and market areas where PWD/PMD are/can be employed?*



2. ***Research on existing private/non formal/adult education initiatives/good practice or project examples for job inclusion and trainings tailored to the needs of enhancing employability of PMD/PWD – are there any/what are they about?***
 - 2.1. *What is the nature/quality and inclusion level of such education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills enabling successful transitions in the labour market?*
 - 2.2. *Who can participate in such activities/which groups are addressed within these activities?*
 - 2.3. *Who offers such trainings/Which organisations from which sector?*
 - 2.4. *What are these trainings, initiatives etc. about?*
 - 2.5. *What are the contents/duration?*
 - 2.6. *Are they addressing entrepreneurial training and/or support?*

After gathering results from the desktop research, this data was analysed in terms of most relevant elements that helped to prepare an on-line survey based on gathering more in-depth information of the problem areas from the perspective of professionals working in different sectors (social care, education, specialized service, HRD, social economy,...). Within the latter a set of statements was developed based on gathered desktop research results for feedback and reflection gathering most pertinent issues/elements of potential disengagement of PWD in education, employment, and society in general (gathering feedback about level of agreement with the statements). The online – survey aimed also at first level stakeholders network building for future project activities. Statements explored the level of agreement within different scopes/problem areas detected within desktop research, such as: existence of discriminatory elements for full participation, stigmatization in the labour market, educational institutions, the value and availability of support services/ measures, need for more person-oriented planning and innovative elements to be included in work with PWD, etc. A simple rating scale with numbers from 1 to 5 was used for assessment of statements, with response options: 1 – fully disagree, 5 - fully agree).

Along with on-line survey development (and first insights gathered from already received feedback), a sample questionnaire was developed for Interviews with professionals in the field of work with PWD – the questionnaire was also used for focus groups events in the countries. As focus groups are intended for caption of personal/professional experience and opinions, the questionnaire was a basis for all focus groups, thus ensuring that discussions remained in the research area. The questionnaire for on-line survey is available in Appendix 1; for the interviews and focus groups, the questionnaire is available in Appendix 2.



Resources:

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2 COUNTRY REVIEW REPORTS

Within this chapter, national information, most relevant data, and results from surveys are available in the following manner:

- National country report and desk top research findings.
- Evaluation of results, gathered through on-line survey, distributed in each country.
- Qualitative report and findings gathered through national focus group events.
- Qualitative report and findings gathered through interviews with different experts from the field national wise.

The gathered efforts of research work done by the consortium can be seen through following achieved and tangible results:

- Online survey responses

Altogether 276 responses were received out of 250 planned initially (50 per each partner - (Belgium 30, Italy 62, Romania 50, Slovenia 44, Spain 90)

- National Focus groups

Altogether 64 persons out of 50 planned initially were reached (10 per each partner - (Belgium 10, Italy 16, Romania 9, Slovenia 19, Spain 10)

- Interview responses

Altogether 48 persons out of 50 planned initially were reached (10 per each partner – Belgium 10. Italy 11, Romania 10, Slovenia 10, Spain 7).

All means of communication channels to reach the professionals were used within the overall research work (one to one conversation, emails, phone, social media, and other on-line social technologies).

We hereby invite you, to take a more in-depth look at the findings, provided for each of the participating country.



2.1 BELGIUM

Legislative background/national regulations dealing with the topic of PMD/PWD

Belgium has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted by the UN on December 6, 2006 on July 2, 2009. In doing so, Belgium undertakes to do everything in its power to integrate people with disabilities into all areas of social life.

This convention begins as follows (Art.1) : *“The purpose of this Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their intrinsic dignity.”* (2006, p.3)

It is therefore a question of reaffirming universal human rights. To do so, the convention recommends practical measures such as accessibility in public areas, institutions, at work, at home. The convention also advocates raising awareness among citizens and loved ones in order to combat stereotypes.

Belgium, which ranked last in the professional integration of disabled people, has reached an important milestone.

Belgium has also ratified the European Directive 2000/78/EC on the creation of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

The principles of equality and non-discrimination set out in article 5 of the Convention (2006) state that States Parties must take all appropriate measures to ensure that reasonable accommodation is made to promote equality and to eliminate discrimination.

With regard to work and employment (article 27 of above mentioned Convention and article 3 of the Directive), participating States recognize the right to persons with disabilities to work, in particular the possibility of earning a living by performing freely chosen work or accepted in an open labour market and in an open work environment, promoting inclusion, accessible to people with disabilities. They guarantee and promote the exercise of the right to work, including for those who have suffered a disability during employment, by taking appropriate measures, inter alia, at the legislative level.

On the Belgian legislative level, there is no differentiation of regulations or measures between the different types of disability. For our analysis, we will therefore take the definition as found in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol:



“By disabled people, we mean “people who have lasting physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disabilities whose interaction with various barriers can hinder their full and effective participation in society on the basis of equality with others” (UN, 2006, p.4).

The implementation of Belgian national directives is entrusted to the 4 so-called Communities:

- Walloon Agency for the integration of disabled people in the Walloon Region
- Brussels Disability Service for Francophones in the Brussels-Capital Region
- “Vlaams Fonds voor Sociale Integratie van Personen met een Handicap” in the Flemish Community;
- “Dienststelle für Personen mit Behinderung” in the German-speaking Community.

In order to be eligible for subsidies and several other services such as specific job counselling, PWD have to be recognized and registered at one of the four mentioned communities.

It should be noted that according to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Belgium, a federal country, each community has its own regulations. The same is true for the arrangements that relate to the employment and training of job seekers. It should also be noted that our research below will primarily focus on the Brussels-Capital and Walloon Regions.

Unfortunately, the institutional complexification has a detrimental effect for all citizens, including citizens with disabilities, who must address a number of different administrations or services according to their specific needs. It follows from this fact that citizens must have a very good knowledge of how legal competencies are distributed between the different levels of power to identify the right institutional interlocutor in a given situation.

In the private sector, people with disabilities are either employed in an Adapted Work Company (a so-called ETA, Entreprise de Travail Adapté) or integrated within a team in a company.

For the public sector, Article 3 of the Royal Decree of March 5, 2007 provides that public services must employ disabled people for up to 3% of their workforce.

Overall, the social integration institutions for people with disabilities provide financial assistance in terms of adapting the workplace or providing personal assistance. Private employers can obtain these interventions for one of their workers if that worker is recognized by one of these official institutions and after a favourable decision from the institution in question. Financial intervention of up to a maximum of 50% of remuneration in the salary and social charges of disabled people is also applicable.



The national legislation is promoting equal employment opportunities of the target group by demanding that employers make adaptations at their workplaces to cater to the needs of PWD. The obligation to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities concerns the entire field of work: both salaried work, unpaid work and self-employment. These accommodations touch the areas of access to work (selection and recruitment criteria), workstation, employment and working conditions, promotion possibilities and training.

Adjustments should be made both in the private and public sectors. When selecting and recruiting, all applicants must have an equal opportunity. If the disability of a candidate so requires, the employer will make an adequate arrangement

Since 2009, the Support Committee for the Recruitment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Public Service (CARPH) has been monitoring the application of the 3% target reserved for the recruitment of people with disabilities in the public sector.

Established by Royal Decree of March 5, 2007, the mission of the Commission is to report to the government on the employment situation of people with disabilities in the federal public service and to advise it on policy in this area. It is also responsible for evaluating the efforts made by federal organizations to reach the target set at 3% of the employment of people with disabilities.

Research on existing private/non formal/adult education initiatives/good practice or project examples

In 2019, a task force working on the national aim of “Handistreaming” was created, as the efforts on national level until then were deemed insufficient by the actors in the field. The name Handistreaming (Parlement Francophone Bruxellois, 2019) is composed of “handicap” and “mainstreaming” and should describe the intention of bringing PWD more into the main job market and ensure a better inclusion of them in society in general. In their report from the same year, the taskforce points out that Brussels is the most advanced region in Belgium when it comes to handistreaming. The COCOF (French Community Commission), has made crucial adjustments to its main office building in Brussels, making it possible to almost reach the self-imposed quota of 5% of PWD in their staff.

In the 4 Regions, and in the two, (i.e. French and Flemish) Communities represented in the bilingual Brussels Region, public bodies are responsible for training people with disabilities who are looking for work. We are going to highlight some of those active in the French-speaking part of the Brussels Region.



A Brussels initiative emanating from Actiris, the Brussels Regional Office for Employment, supports companies in the public and private sectors who wish to hire disabled people by providing them with a diversity plan, unique financial assistance as well as support for reflection and the implementation of a diversity policy within companies. There is a lot of brochure-type information available on the Actiris website. Furthermore, Actiris organizes so-called Win / Win days of meetings between employers and disabled job seekers.

The service PHARE (Personne Handicapée Autonomie Recherchée), another agency, under the supervision of the COCOF, is another key destination for PWD looking to lead a more independent life. The COCOF takes care of the responsibilities of the French Community in the Brussels-Capital Region when it comes to education, culture, health care and assistance to citizens. PHARE provides all sorts of information about housing, occupations, and employment to PWD, their families, but also interested employers.

One notable initiative is the organization of DUO days, a sort of short internship program in which a PWD can explore a job in a company for a limited amount of time, ranging anywhere between 1 and 20 days. This short-term internship allows the PWD to explore new career options by doing a reality check of their own expectations, but also allows interested employers to check if their workplace is actually suitable for PWD, and if not, to get information about necessary measures to be taken.

In Brussels, Bruxelles Formation, a bi-lingual public training centre exists and works in collaboration with 5 support services, each specializing in a disability sector. The only *ad-hoc* training we have found is office automation and building.

Unia, an independent public institution, offers training to sensitize employers about issues such as discrimination against PWD, and helps them to accommodate them better with workshops for their human resource departments, which need to be able to adapt their selection criteria to that potentially new audience.

Access to specialized education ends at the age of 21. Young disabled adults have no choice but to go through these structures if they want to access a profession. Also, employers are encouraged to have some employees attend classes about sign language and/or easy-to-read language.

It seems that the initiatives and public bodies mentioned above manage to provide a good amount of PWD with work, although there seems to be a lot of room for improvement, too, as Diversicom (n.d.) states:



15% of the Belgian working age population has a physical, sensory, or mental handicap. The employment rate of people with disabilities is around 35%, whereas 41% of people with disabilities consider themselves able to carry out a professional activity. However, EU-wide, the rate of employment of PWD is around 50%, which means that there is clearly some catching-up to do. On a more positive note, 91% of companies are satisfied with their disabled workers.

In public companies, compulsory quotas (3%) are enforced, but not reached yet.

In private companies, inclusion is a challenge that is left to the choice of companies.

A big part of PWD can find a suitable job at Adapted work companies, which are essential employers for them, but not sufficient to provide an occupation for everyone.

Although most of the employers in the public or private sector seem to be satisfied with the performance of their employees with disabilities, it is evident that PWD still face some obstacles when it comes to their inclusion. Firstly, lack of information and hence ignorance of the handicap generates prejudices and discriminatory behaviour from employers and colleagues. Secondly, the social system does not encourage people with disabilities enough to try the professional adventure: the accessibility leaves to be desired and employment / handicap policies spread over different skill levels. Thirdly, poor adaptation of the work environment and organization remains one of the major obstacles for people with disabilities to their inclusion in the labour market.

Emphasis is placed on the need to develop training, accessibility, the travel/transport chain, communication aimed at overcoming psychological obstacles, in view of increasing competitiveness and its requirements.

In order to provide PWD a fair chance on the job market, they get specialized job trainings at their special needs' education facilities.

Special secondary school education welcomes children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 21. The last years of education are often oriented towards professional training, for example, office work, kitchen, timber work, gardening, etc.

After special secondary school education, pupils are offered the possibility of either waiting for a place in a day care centre (occupational) or to be integrated in an ETA (Etablissement de Travail Adapté) if their handicap is not too severe.

The public sector has the obligation to include in its staff 3% of disabled people. However, this obligation is not sanctioned if this quota is not respected. More often than not, no training is given either to supervisors or to persons hired. Therefore, employers are struggling with the



inclusion of PWD, and PWD potentially find themselves in working environments that are not adapted to them.

The safest way to get a job as a recognized PWD is by applying at an “Entreprise de Travail Adapté” (ETA). These Adapted Work Enterprises are social economy enterprises whose priority mission is the professional integration of people with disabilities (physical, mental).

They thus offer disabled people a guaranteed salary level as well as social status and job security guaranteed by an employment contract. The working conditions in those workplaces are adapted to the individual needs of the employees with disabilities.

In Belgium, around 120 ETA sell their services and productions on the ordinary market. They are full-fledged economic players: they meet the same constraints as those required for any other structure on the “classic” circuit: quality of service, respect for deadlines, productivity requirements, etc.

Active in more than 20 major sectors (food, crafts, animals, construction, wood, electricity, electronics, packaging, horticulture, printing, rental, mechanics, metals, cleaning, paper, plastic, catering, textiles, glass and various), ETA provide multi-activity services in order to allow all their workers to be active in an “adapted” job, taking into account their qualifications and the types of their handicap.

The profile of workers within them is very varied. These may be people with visible disabilities, birth disabilities, people who have had a work accident that led to a permanent disability, or people with illnesses that do not appear or show little or no evidence.

They constitute the main opportunity for the less able-bodied to find a job as well as a possibility of social integration and development in optimal conditions from the point of view of remuneration, promotion, supervision, and social security. In order to work in an ETA, an employee with a disability must have been recognized and be registered with the regional supervisory body. Within ETA, training is done by practice, it is often repetitive work that requires little training.

In the Walloon region alone, 8,000 people with disabilities are involved in these ETAs.

The total share of subsidies from which ETAs benefit is around 30% of their budget, the remaining 70% must therefore be imperatively generated by their own economic activity, often putting a lot of pressure on some categories of disabled staff.



In the last few years, the possibilities for PWD to find a suitable occupation have increased, with the creation of several private initiatives that want to offer them a vaster choice of professions, while paying attention to their specific needs.

Some young private initiatives are gradually opening. These centres have the will to highlight the capacities of people with disabilities, to train them and to think about putting these skills at the service of society.

Besides the initiatives such as PHARE, there are more and more smaller initiatives such as Diversicom, that want to create a link between PWD and interested employers. They broaden the offer of imaginable jobs for PWD by providing potential employers with more information about the needs a certain PWD would have at their workplace.

We're highlighting some private initiatives that are mainly active in the Brussels region, in quite diverse fields.

The restaurant "65 degrés" opened in 2018. The servers and some of the kitchen staff are mentally handicapped. They receive practical training and they are supervised and accompanied by a manager and professionals from the catering sector. Roughly a dozen PWD work there under an apprenticeship contract.

Cap Event is an association which organizes events and whose services are provided by people with disabilities employed under a voluntary contract; the staff gets an initial training and then works as catering servers at events.

There are also some initiatives in bakery such as Fariflu or Artos, but these are at day centres where people with disabilities are often not remunerated. It is rather an occupation than a job.

Artistic expression and creative jobs are an option to be considered as well: initiatives such as the Ateliers Indigo, Créahm, La S Grand Atelier or Zone Art provide their artists with disabilities an adapted environment in which already recognized artists can help them to build their own careers in art.

The Brussels Circus has launched a project named "Handicirque", in which PWD can learn the diverse disciplines of circus art.



Resources:

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2.1.1 Results of online survey

The online survey in Belgium was primarily shared with the potential stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project, namely institutions from private and public sector such as centres for social work, employment offices, rehabilitation institutions, employment centres and other organisations, that in one way or another work with or include PWD.

With our questionnaire, we were able to reach a vast array of people in different fields. Out of our 30 respondents, over a third work in human resources departments, whereas close to a quarter works in the social sector. 10% are active in education. We also got replies from the public sector, culture, sports and an ETA (entreprise de travail adapté).

76,7% of our respondents work closely or directly with PWD, whereas the rest works more indirectly with them.

2. Comment votre travail quotidien est-il lié aux personnes en situation de handicap ?
(réponse nécessaire)

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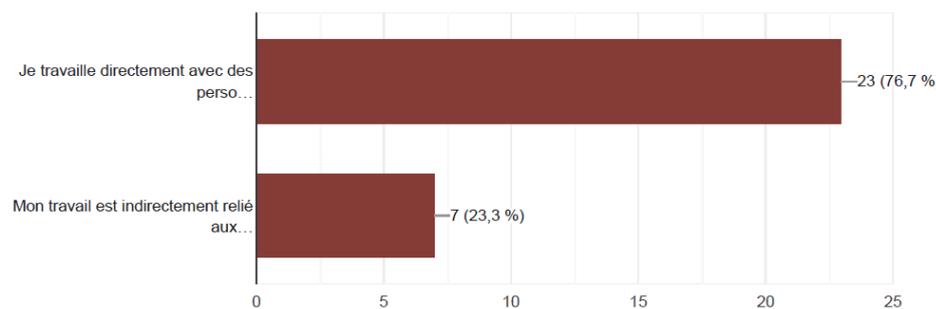


Table: 1a

The vast majority (93,3%) of our collected data comes from Belgium, but we were also able to reach some partners in Luxembourg.

4. Dans quel pays se trouve l'établissement principal de votre organisation? (réponse non obligatoire):

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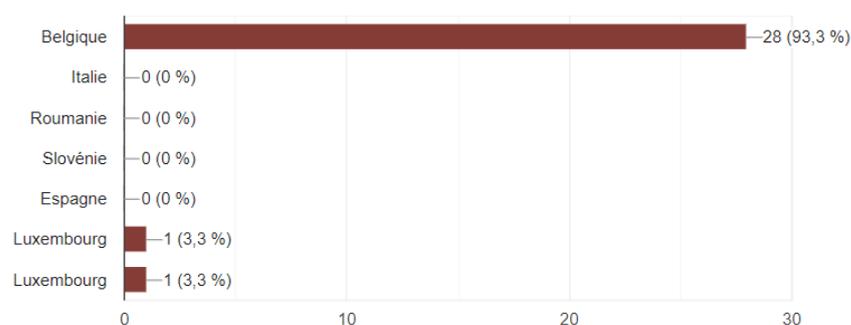


Table: 2a



For the following items, the respondents were confronted with statements and they had to state whether they disagree fully (1) or agree (5) with them.

5. Pour chacune des phrases ci-dessous, nous vous prions de bien vouloir y répondre en choisissant une des options qui correspond à votre niveau d'accord avec la déclaration (1 – pas du tout d'accord, 5 – complètement d'accord):

a) Bien que diverses législations nationales, politiques et stratégiques d'emploi favorisent l'égalité des opportunités pour la pleine participation au marché de l'emploi, en réalité des éléments discriminatoires peuvent encore être observés lorsqu'il s'agit d'employer une personne en situation d'handicap dans le marché ouvert de l'emploi

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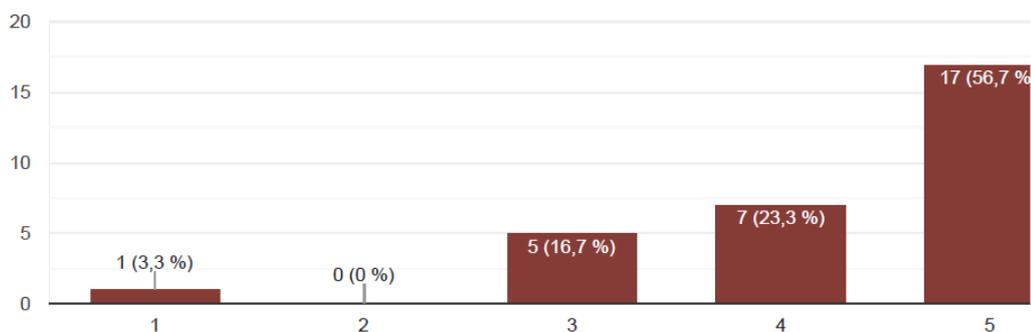


Table: 3a

When asked if they believe that PWD still face discrimination when it comes to their access on the primary labour market despite legislative and political efforts, 56,7% agreed fully. 23,3% agreed strongly, whereas 16,7% were uncertain or neutral about that statement. Only one respondent disagreed with the statement. The general tendency seems to be that discrimination is still noticeably present.

An extension of this observation could be that a vast majority more or less strongly agrees that people with mental disabilities are still stigmatized among employers; again, only one person strongly disagreed with the statement.

b) La stigmatisation des personnes atteintes de troubles mentaux est toujours présente chez les employeurs

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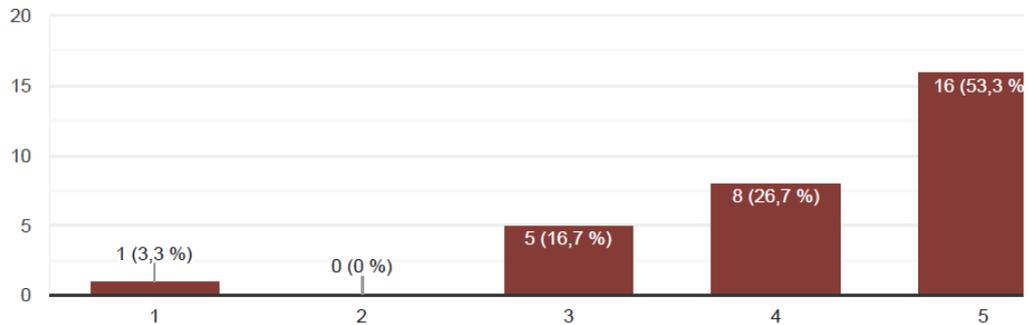


Table: 4a

The stigmatisation of people with mental disabilities seems to be less strongly present in education; here, only 23,3% totally agreed, while 40% still strongly believed it was the case. 30% were neutral or uncertain, whereas 6,7% disagreed with the statement. The tendency towards an agreement is less strong than in the previous questions.

c) La stigmatisation des personnes atteintes de troubles mentaux est toujours présentes dans diverses institutions d'éducation.

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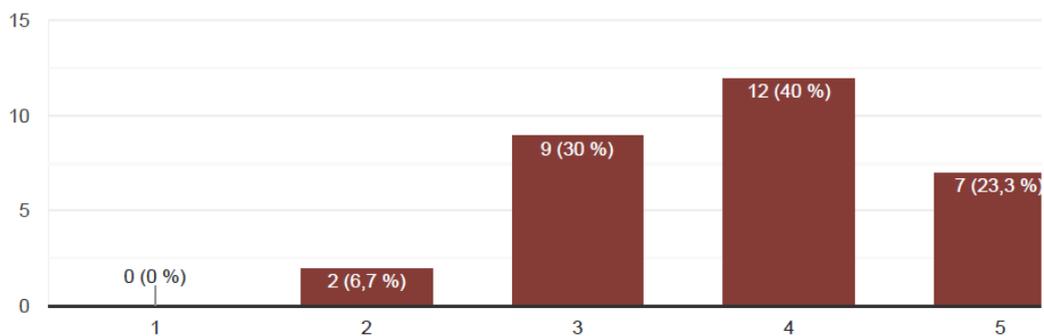


Table: 5a

Belgium and Luxembourg have instated minimum quotas for employment of PWD; a measure that is deemed highly insufficient to actually promote the inclusion of PWD in the labour market by over 80% of respondents.

d) Le quota national actuel concernant l'emploi des personnes en situation de handicap ne promeut pas pleinement l'inclusion dans le marché du travail.

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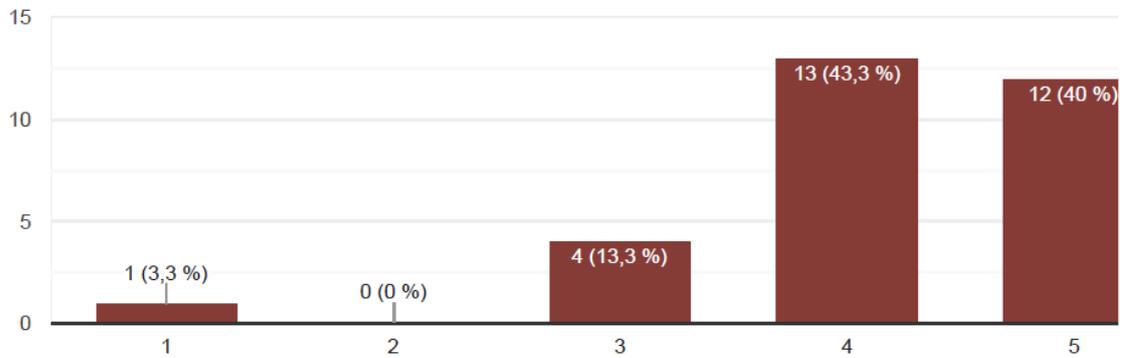


Table: 6a

Another shared opinion is that the current offer of assistance and services for PWD who want to get professional training or counselling are dispersed between a large amount of authorities and organisations. However, we have to note that quite a lot of respondents (23%) seem to be uncertain about that statement.

e) Les services disponibles et les mesures de support offertes aux personnes en situation de handicap concernant la formation et reformation professionnelle sont encore aujourd'hui dispersés entre différentes autorités et organisations.

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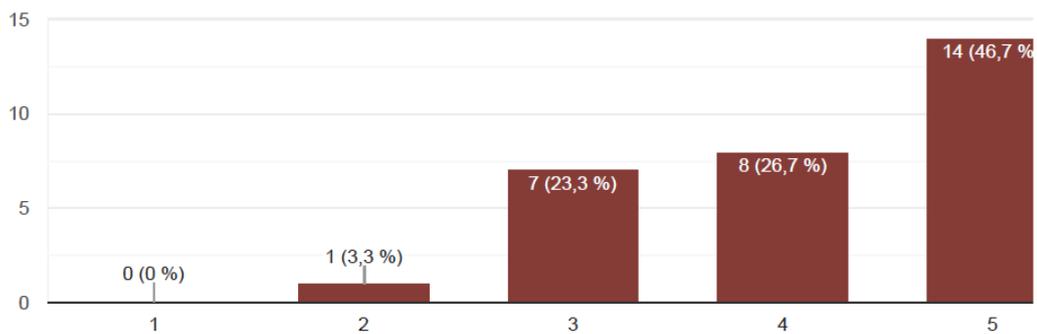


Table: 7a

The respondents have also pointed out a lack of systematically offered training opportunities for PWD that would enable them to choose a job they might enjoy; over 75% think that there is not enough support yet, whereas the rest thinks that there are already plenty opportunities available.

f) Il y a un manque d'opportunités de formations et/ou reformatons plus concrètes et adaptés offertes de façon systématiques aux personnes en situation de handicap dans le but d'au moins augmenter leur chance d'exercer un travail librement choisi dans le marché ouvert de l'emploi.

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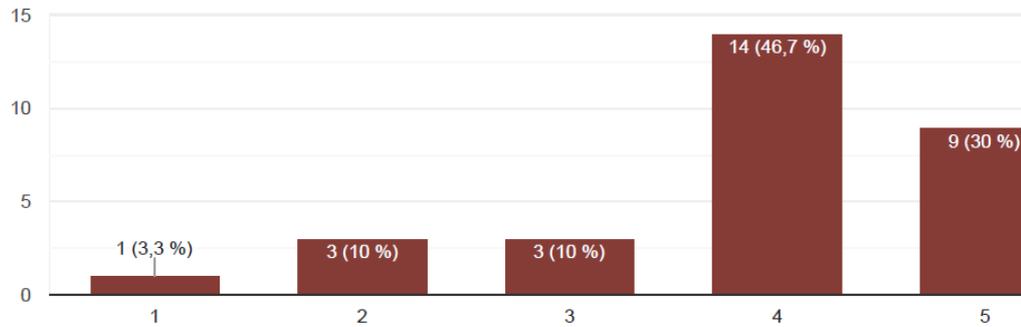


Table: 8a

Is a more person-centred, holistic approach with empowering new training methods necessary to give PWD more chances for inclusion? Our respondents seem to agree strongly with that idea overall.

g) Une approche plus centrée sur la personne ; contemporaine et holistique (y compris des éléments d'autonomisation et des formations innovatrices) est nécessaire dans les organisations qui emploient des personnes en situation de handicap.

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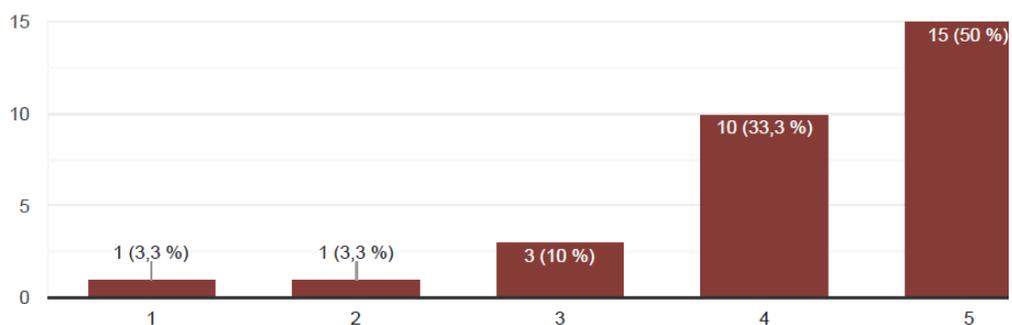


Table: 9a

They also quite strongly agree that the currently provided professional trainings for PWD are not really centred on persons with disabilities; 30% are fully convinced of that, while 43,3% still strongly agree. Close to a quarter of respondents were undecided. In combination with the previous item, we are led to think that there is a large need for (and currently unsatisfying offer of) holistic, person-centred approaches.

h) Les offres nationales de formation à l'emploi existantes ne sont pas centrées sur la personne en situation de handicap.

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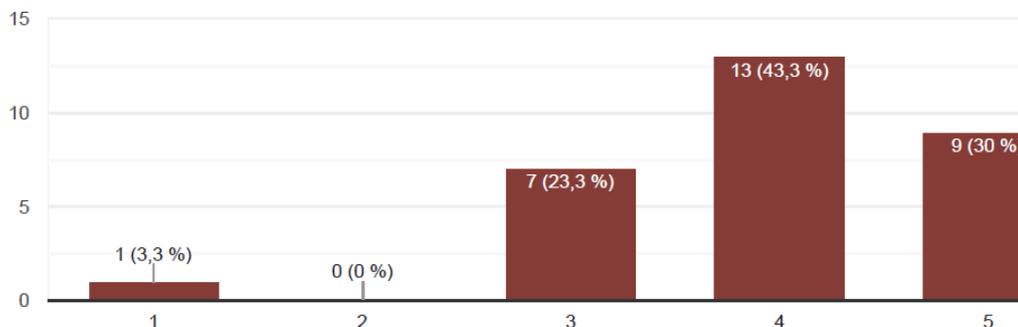


Table: 10a

Over 80% of our respondents shared the opinion that activities to include PWD in the primary labour market should be more person-centred and individualized if they really want to be effective.

i) Un plan plus individualisé et centré sur la personne devrait être inclus dans toutes les activités qui supportent la pleine participation des personnes en situation de handicap dans le marché du travail.

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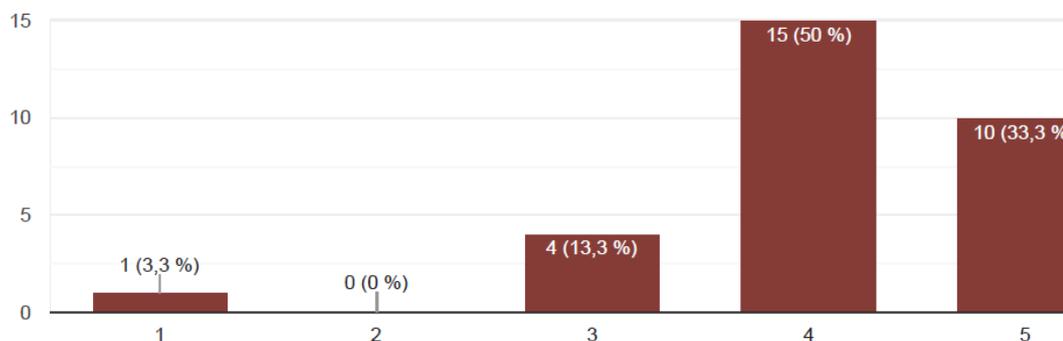


Table: 11a

Whereas the opinions on the other questions were mostly one-sided, our final question seemed to be a bit more divisive. When asked if they know of any innovative training methods or good examples of successful practices, only about half of the respondents claimed that they do, whereas the other half seems to be missing such good examples or hasn't heard of any promising new practices or success stories.



j) Je connais des approches innovatrices de formation et des exemples de bonnes pratiques dans mon pays, surtout celles promouvant une approche en profondeur dans le secteur de l'inclusion dans l'emploi des personnes en situation de handicap.

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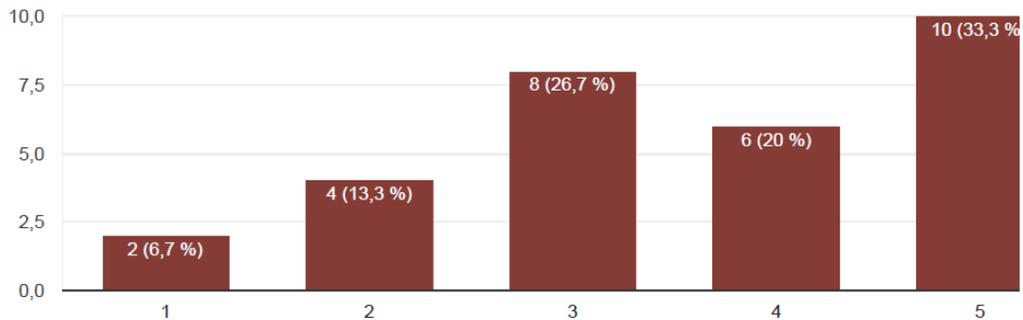


Table: 12a

The results of the online survey allowed us to confirm some impressions that we had while writing the country review about the current legal situation and the struggles that PWD face on their quest for employment on the primary labour market. Most respondents seem to confirm that PWD are still heavily stigmatised, both among employers and in the education sector. Moreover, the minimum employment quotas for PWD instated by the government are deemed insufficient to actually include them fully in the primary labour market. A lot of respondents also voiced their concerns about the fact that, while there is plenty of help available already for PWD, it is spread out between a multitude of authorities and associations. It is therefore also noteworthy that some respondents admitted that they are not aware of any promising “good examples” of innovative, person-centred approaches, which are however seen as so necessary to enable more PWD to access the primary labour market and choose a profession that fits both their aspirations and their specific needs.

2.1.2 Focus groups

The focus group in Belgium took place online in late April 2020. It represents a first effort to unite a line-up of associations, organisations and companies in Belgium that work for and/or with people with disabilities within different sectors to share and discuss their concerns, strategies, and plans. The following organizations participated in the skype call with a total of 10 participants:

- ACTIRIS Service Diversité
- Service PHARE
- PUSH ASBL



- FEBRAP
- CAP-EVENT
- HANDISTREAMING
- DIVERSICOM
- ATELIERS INDIGO

To open the conversation, every association presented itself. All of them (private and public sector) are working in the field of inclusion policies and approaches, training and vocational education and training development for adults, regional development, up-skilling and inclusion of most vulnerable societal groups. While they do work in different sectors, they do have a lot of common concerns, which we will highlight in the following paragraphs. The research questions that were provided in the guide were used to structure the conversation.

First, we talked about obstacles that PWD have to face while looking for employment. The participants pointed out that in their opinion, there is a significant lack of knowledge about disabilities in society. Employers, HR departments and future colleagues need to learn more about different disabilities. Prejudices could hinder interested employers from hiring PWD, as they might be unaware of the strengths and weaknesses of their potential employee. Also, employers seem to struggle to differentiate between disabilities by focussing only on physical disabilities and completely dismissing the mental ones. Hence, they might only think of accessibility in terms of wheelchair ramps but are less likely to think about accommodation for deaf people or people with mental disabilities such as autism. PWD are still stigmatized and discriminated against. There is a lack of easy-to-read information and a lack of sign language translators. Not knowing where to ask for help, employers seem to overestimate the potential challenge of hiring a PWD and are less likely to “take the risk” of hiring a presumably slower workforce that needs extra accommodations. Meanwhile, a short awareness-raising training would perhaps highlight that they are better prepared for the challenge than they initially thought; maybe an employee already know sign language, or maybe an employee can relate to a person with autism because he/she already knows people with that profile? On the same note, it was pointed out that a lot of PWD struggle to find employment because they are likely to focus and fixate on their weaknesses and barriers rather than their strengths and/or interests. This seems to be a problem that originates in their education and is harder to solve later, as they need special support and career counselling. Professional trainings need to be adapted to them, and there must be more no-strings-attached ways for them to explore different sectors and fields. First-hand experiences in the labour market, such as in short internships like the DuoDay, or volunteering as it is enabled by PUSH, should help them to dare to experiment and eventually find their place in society.

Person-centred training programs and support to build a life project are crucial for PWD, not only until they find the occupation that fulfils them, but also afterwards; it is advised that they are accompanied also throughout their work life.

Another problem that our participants pointed out is the complexity of the support system for PWD and employers alike: funding questions are tricky to answer due to the fact that Belgium is divided into 4 communities. Focussing more specifically on the Brussels region, there is still a separation between the Walloon and the Flemish side and a general lack of transparency as to what associations, organisations and services are available for PWD and which one is suited best for any person's specific needs. Therefore, ACTIRIS is currently working on a dedicated website that is supposed to centralize all the information about associations and organizations for PWD.

One final promising strategy to give PWD more space in society is to share a lot of positive experiences of them in the media. Reports in form of videos or short articles should reach employers and the general public to show what PWD are capable of and should also make it clearer to the latter that there are indeed fulfilling opportunities for them available.

Impact studies have shown that employers are generally happy with their employees with disabilities, and opportunities like the DuoDay were very well received to bring the primary labour market and PWD closer together. The participants in the focus group spend a lot of time and energy on sharing the positive experiences that PWD have in the job market thanks to their help. However, they all agreed that those publicity efforts would gain in impact and credibility if PWD themselves shared their positive experiences. Satisfied employers could also help with raising awareness by highlighting their positive experiences with their new employees, while of course making sure that their statements are sincere and not mere acts of "social-washing". Also, providing PWD with jobs in sectors with a lot of human interactions, such as catering or events in general, could be quite uplifting both for the employees and for the potential audience; by getting more PWD into the spotlight by doing "normal" work, they gain more visibility, which in turn could encourage other PWD to consider such work as well. To conclude, a lot of emphasis was put on the fact that we all need to raise awareness about disabilities; employers (and the rest of society too, for that matter) should be much better informed about disabilities, so that we as a society can overcome stigmata and stop discrimination. In addition, more positive footage in the media should encourage and empower PWD to dare to look for fulfilling activities.



2.1.3 Interviews

The interviews were held in March and April 2020 with responses received from:

- Actiris Service Diversité BELGIUM
- Service PHARE BELGIUM
- Diversicom BELGIUM
- Cap-Event BELGIUM
- Agence pour la Transition vers une vie autonome (Ministère de l'Education nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse) LUXEMBOURG
- the rest of the interview partners chose to remain unnamed, but work in the field of special needs education in LU an BE

All of the partners work more or less directly with PDW; Diversicom and ATVA provide them with information and career counselling; Actiris, Phare and Diversicom present them with job opportunities and also sensitize potential employers to the needs of PWD with special workshops and general advice about workplace adaptations. CAP-Event offers PWD small jobs in the event business.

To guide the interviews, we mostly used the research questions that were provided, while also trying to improve and adapt the interview questions after each interview ; this allowed us to get complementary input on certain issues and to highlight recurring answers.

As we have mentioned in our country review, Belgium is divided in several communities when it comes to the implementation of Belgian national directives.

While our interview partners all agree that the “handstreaming” seems to have evolved over the last years, they also underline that the communication between those communities, or the lack thereof, can make it quite hard for PWD to know where to ask for help. In addition, it was pointed out repeatedly that while there are more and more initiatives for PWD to choose from, it is really hard to get an overall view. Actiris revealed that they are currently working on creating a dedicated network that should facilitate the interactions between PWD, employers and associations that provide help for both.

When it comes to job prospects, it seems like the choices for PWD are rather limited, despite an increasing number of public and private associations being open to hire them; no matter what their disability or how severe it is, most of them are likely to have to consider working at an ETA (entreprise de travail adapté) which are not a perfect fit for all of them. These sheltered workshops do however ensure that they are well-accompanied in their workday, and the work they have to execute is usually well-adapted to their capabilities as it is repetitive and requires little training. It has to be pointed out that these ETAs are highly



competitive companies that need to fulfil real orders and generate income like any other company, which means that the working rhythm can be increasingly high and productivity is a real concern for them.

Furthermore, several types of disabilities mingle there (which can lead to conflicts) and have to compete with each other and/or people that follow a social reinsertion program, such as long-term unemployed people.

On the primary labour market, employers are still hesitant to hire PWD; one big obstacle is that there is little to no differentiation between different disabilities; the stereotype of a disabled person “sitting in a wheelchair” seems to persist, as there is less consideration for mental or cognitive disabilities than for physical ones.

The general public seems to remain quite uninformed or misinformed about different disabilities; there is a great need for information campaigns to make employers and HR departments realize that there are various different disabilities that require special attention and adaptations at the workplace, but also that they can get a lot of help to do so.

However, all participants were also happy to highlight a positive trend when it comes to experiences of PWD on the primary job market; activities like the DuoDay seem to get more employers interested to take up the “challenge” of hiring people with PWD, and according to a current internal impact study by Diversicom, most, if not all employers they interacted with over the last 5 years were satisfied with their employees with disabilities. It is also very important to share such positive results publicly; Diversicom publishes short interviews of success stories on their website to encourage more PWD to venture into the primary labour market.

Nevertheless, a lot of voices expressed their concerns about the fact that PWD, while often welcomed for small internships or a non-binding discovery day, still seem to be underestimated in their capacities, and often reduced to do work that isn't very fulfilling to them; very often, their work ends up being monotonous and repetitive. Rarely are PWD actually offered employment after the end of a small test-internship; employers and also colleagues need to be better prepared to accommodate a more diverse staff.

In Luxembourg, there was a large gap between special needs education and the primary labour market; the young adults need a lot of guidance to find their way into autonomy: partners from Belgium agreed that young adults with disabilities might not be encouraged enough to look for occupations outside of the ETAs. However, there have been interesting developments to at least help them with their applications. Furthermore, special needs education should help young adults to shift their focus from their disabilities and obstacles to their strong suits and capabilities in general; they should dare to dream bigger and try out jobs that they feel passionate about. They need help to build their own life project. With the



necessary help and assistance, they have a better chance to find their place in society, and society can get help to offer them more places to choose from.

Our interview partners agree that it is probably impossible to fully include PWD in the primary labour market with legal incentives alone, but with a lot of guidance and information for both employers and potential employees as well as more transparency between the associations that do care about inclusion, things can only get better.



2.2 ITALY

The application of the national rules on mandatory job placement is extended to people with mental and intellectual disabilities with a working capacity that allows their employment in compatible tasks.

The evaluation of the person with disabilities must take into account the working and relational capacity and not only the physical or mental disability. The ability to work is ascertained by the committees responsible for ascertaining disability, which includes a specialist in the neurological, psychiatric or psychological disciplines.

The ascertainment of the conditions of disability (art. 1 - paragraph 4 of law 68/99), relating to residual capacities, allows access to the system for job placement and to targeted placement paths.

The Italian regulatory framework is defined above all by Law No. 104 of 1992 (Framework Law for assistance, social integration and the rights of disabled people), by Law n.68 of 1999, by D.Leg. 276/2003 (inclusion of disabled people in social cooperatives and the instrument of the Conventions ex art. 14), and finally by the Law. 247/2007 and the Legislative Decree No. 151/2015 which offer additional tools for the effective integration of the disabled worker. Law 68/99 regulates the labour integration of people with different abilities (sensorial, physical, mental). Companies with more than 15 employees and less than 35 must hire 1 disabled worker (2 if the company has between 35 and 50 employees), registered in the lists of the Protected Categories, at the Labour offices managed by the Metropolitan Cities and the Provinces. Companies with more than 50 employees must employ a number of disabled people equal to 7% of workers. Since January 2018, the penalties for companies that do not comply with this obligation have been tightened.

The cornerstones of the laws in force to support the employment of disabled people are:

- Lists and rankings of disabled unemployed people (Protected Categories).
- Forecast of the reserve quota, that is the obligation to hire disabled people beyond a certain number of employees, in charge of the companies.
- The instrument of agreements between companies and competent territorial offices
- Involvement of institutional subjects (Ministry of Labour, Technical Committee for drafting the disabled card, INAIL, ANPAL).
- System of economic incentives for hiring
- Checks by the National Labour Inspectorate on compliance with employment obligations and exemptions.
- Sanctions for companies that do not comply with the obligation to employ disabled people



Law 68/99 has foreseen the tool of "targeted placement" to hire the person with disabilities in the most suitable workplace, through personalized paths of inclusion in the work context. The employment of a disabled worker requires different timing and methods depending on the personal situation and the context where he/she will be included. The targeted placement is implemented with flexible tools that meet both the needs of businesses and those of people with disabilities. For those cases where the access to the labour market is more difficult, a work integration agreement can be stipulated. The employer has the right to choose by name and, for the disabled person, there are opportunities to facilitate recruitment. For example, the disabled worker can:

1. carry out an internship with training and orientation purposes,
2. be employed with a fixed-term employment contract,
3. take advantage of a longer trial period than the one foreseen in the work contract.

These tools are even more important for the job placement of people with mental disabilities who need support to work through vocational training activities, internships, guided work experiences.

The school, training and social and health services, together with the action of families, have promoted preparatory initiatives for work integration, allowing in particular the mentally disabled to enter the labour market.

It is desirable in the future to have a greater and more widespread access to the opportunities offered by law n. 68/99.

Law n. 68 of 1999 defines targeted placement as a series of technical and support tools that allow people with disabilities to be adequately assessed in their working skills and to place them in the right place, through:

- job analysis,
- forms of support, positive actions,
- solutions to problems connected with environments, tools and interpersonal relationships in everyday work and relationships.

In essence, the assumption is that there can be no exclusion from the labour market in general because, not always, a particular type or degree of disability corresponds to a decrease or absence of working capacity. Therefore, PWDs / PMDs, who aspire to a job suited to their abilities and meet the required requirements, must register on the appropriate lists held at the local Public Employment Center. There, the following features are noted in a special fiche:

- working skills,
- abilities, competences, and inclinations,
- the nature and degree of disability,



- the characteristics of the places to be assigned, favouring the meeting between job demand and supply.

With the D. Leg. 151/2015, rules are introduced for the rationalization and simplification regarding the integration of people with disabilities.

The Targeted Placement Database is established, and the incentive system is modified. In addition, Guidelines are introduced, consisting of several Decrees of the Minister of labour and social policies to coordinate the services of Targeted Placement. The purposes are to:

- coordinate the services of the Targeted Placement;
- promote the network of local services and INAIL;
- foresee the participation of social partners, PWD / PMD associations and family members, social cooperatives, in the choice of interventions;
- give importance to the bio-psycho-social assessment of the disability and the job features;
- promote the establishment of an inclusion manager (the figure of the Disability Manager) in large companies

Training courses funded by the Region / Province provided by employment agencies and training institutions for PWD / PMD are provided to increase job opportunities. Currently, it is available the activation of training internships through territorial bodies (for example CELAV - Municipality of Milan) that facilitate the work placement. Through public local funds, some social cooperatives and associations promote SFA (Autonomy Training Services) courses. To date, no homogeneous data are available with respect to internships and activated courses and internships.

Actually, figures of HR diversity manager are not so common in Italy, just big companies at multinational level has one in the structure.

According the act n.68 of 1999 it is possible to have a reduced working time: 21 hours per week so a lot of PMD/PWD work just part time.

Law No. 104 of 1992 states that people with disabilities (and even their families) have the right to paid leave for a total of 3 days a month.

The 2015 Stability Law provided for an increase in the National Fund for the right to work of PWD / PMD, for hiring incentives. Those for people with mental and intellectual disabilities consist of 70% of the gross monthly salary for a period of 60 months.

For these workers, fixed-term hiring is encouraged for a period of not less than 12 months. In addition, the funding of work inclusion experimentations of PWDs is introduced by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.



Data on the situation of people with disabilities are fragmented and difficult to find. Each Italian Region (the body in charge of the Employment Policies of the disabled, which in turn are delegated to the Provinces), processes data and statistics with different times and methods.

The most recent and reliable national data on the employment of people with disabilities was published by ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics) in 2015 and confirms that only 19.7% of seriously disabled people of working age (15-64 years, about 549,000 people) are occupied.

The employment situation of people with mental disabilities is certainly critical. There are still few PMDs that find stable employment, despite a very advanced regulatory framework and a protective incentive system. In companies, the prejudice that disabled people are unproductive generally persists. There is still one more disadvantage towards psychic disability, which is the stigma, which refers to environmental / cultural barriers. Even architectural barriers are an obstacle to the employment of people with reduced mobility and sensory disabilities (for example, the blind).

Most disabled people are employed in low-skilled positions despite some having good potential and good schooling. The main employment sectors in both public and private companies are catering, cleaning, garden maintenance, back office (data entry), call centre.

Some positive experiences of job placement of PWD / PMD operated by institutions and private companies, deserve to be detailed. Here we mention three specific projects, which can be considered as best practices.

The "Job Stations" project, carried out by Progetto Itaca onlus, is a network of Smart Working centres, for assisted remote work, dedicated to people with mental disabilities, particularly diagnosed with depression or eating disorders. An important role in the project is given by the Tutor who is constantly present in the job station to ensure support and assistance to workers with mental distress. The tutor helps workers face with and manage everyday activities. The activities carried out in a protected environment are suitable for being carried out remotely, without the stress of relating to colleagues, which is difficult for those with a mental disability: in the job station there are neither noises, nor constant pressure, nor confusion.

The most suitable tasks assigned to the workers of the job station are those to be carried out at the desk, for example: management of archives, updating and creation of company databases, control of expense notes, processing of insurance practices.

The strengths of this project are many: disabled people can fully integrate into the labour market; companies can outsource activities and fulfil the legal obligations of hiring workers with different abilities (Law 68/1999).



The Job station project has transformed stories of mental distress into resources. People regain self-confidence and defeat social exclusion.

Another positive work inclusion experience of PMD / PWD concerns young people diagnosed with high-functioning autism and it is the "Rain Man" project implemented by ALSTOM, a large company in the railway sector, in its Bologna branch. The project was born from the consideration that people who have an autism spectrum disorder can express very good or above-average performances, in certain areas. Moreover, ALSTOM has included the figure of the Disability Manager in the management of human resources.

The third best practices is a 'training and job placement initiative, "Not to forget (Per non dimenticare)", promoted in Milan by Diesis, a non-profit association which activates inclusion projects for young people diagnosed with high-functioning autism and Asperger, in partnership with the Work Mediation Service (CELAV) of the Municipality of Milan and with BES Social Cooperative. In a protected environment within the spaces of BES, eight boys with high-functioning autism, followed and assisted by tutors and IT specialists, are engaged in the digitalisation of the lists of Italian people deported to extermination camps from Northern Italy in 1943 -1945.

The project, funded by ANED (National Association of former deported people) and some banking foundations, has started with a two-week training period and will last about six months.

The initiative confirms that even people with neurodiversity linked to autism can be helped to acquire professional skills and to enter the labour market in a profitable way, creating a life path that allows the achievement of a good degree of autonomy and well-being.

These best practices prove that the network building of social workers (especially social cooperatives, local authorities, public or private companies, family associations and social-health services) is the basis for the success of work inclusion paths of PWD / PMD.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the figure of the Disability Manager, still not very widespread in companies, actually represents a very important and effective resource in the professional paths of workers with disabilities.

To date, in Job Station project, more than 60 people have been hired with a regular work contract, spread among several private companies. This number refers to all the Job Station centers active in Italy in the last 5 years. The data is indicative of the critical state of employment of PMDs.

Another data comes from the Lombardy Region and refers to 2015: only 5% of people with mental and relational disabilities find a job.

As part of the "Rain Man" project of ALSTOM with the support of the Department of Mental Health of the USL Company and the ANGSA (Association of Autistic People's Parents) of Bologna, 4 workers with autistic functioning were included, with the task of verifying the



safety equipment in a team of engineers. For each of the workers, internships were defined with specific and customized objectives. Before the internship began, dedicated training courses were held for the employees of the site, as well as periodic meetings with the company's managers. After two semesters of training, workers are now hired with permanent contracts.

PMD with a medium / high intellectual functioning can participate in such trainings.

Among the private companies that offer jobs to the people included in the Job Station, the most important one is Accenture (business consulting sector in various sectors). Others are: ALSTOM SPA, a transnational corporate active in the transport sector, and BES Social Cooperative which operates in the IT sector.

The purpose of these initiatives is to provide the PMDs / PWDs involved in the projects with training courses both in the socio-working and professional fields. People can increase their job opportunities with these training courses.

The duration of these courses is variable (from 3 to 12 months) based on the skills and needs of PMD / PWD. Contents are flexible and customizable based on the characteristics of the workers and the needs of the companies involved. Among the most requested, we can list Office Package, Java programming, software testing and quality control.

We are aware of only one project that aims to support the entrepreneurship of PMD / PWD. "More Than Dis" is a competition launched last October by the Italian Accenture Foundation with Jobmetoo and Make a Cube 3, with the support of Auticon and FISH (Italian Federation for Overcoming Handicaps) to promote projects and ideas of young entrepreneurs with different abilities.

Resources:

1 INPS. Retrieved from:

<https://www.inps.it/nuovoportaleinps/default.aspx?iPrestazioni=100&iTipoUtente=7610>

2 ISTAT. Retrieved from: <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/disabili>

3 CELAV. Retrieved from: <https://www.comune.milano.it/servizi/centro-mediazione-al-lavoro1>

4 Ministero del lavoro e delle politiche social. Retrieved from:

<https://www.lavoro.gov.it/Pagine/default.aspx>

5 Job Stations Project – Progetto ITACA. Retrieved from: <https://jobstations.it/>



6 Rain Man Project – ALSTOM. Retrieved from:

<https://www.superabile.it/cs/superabile/lavoro/20181123-progetto-rain-man-bologna.html>

7 Per non dimenticare Project – DIESIS. Retrieved from: <https://associazionediesis.org/per-non-dimenticare/>

8 More than DIS Competition – Fondazione Accenture: <https://morethandis.ideatre60.it/>

Relevant rules:

- <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1992/02/17/092G0108/sg>
- <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/99068l.htm> (Rules for the right to work of disabled people)
- <https://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/03276dl.htm>
- <https://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/07247l.htm>
- [https://www.cliclavoro.gov.it/Normative/Decreto Legislativo 14 settembre 2015 n.151.pdf](https://www.cliclavoro.gov.it/Normative/Decreto_Legislativo_14_settembre_2015_n.151.pdf)

2.2.1 Results of online survey

The online survey in Italy was primarily disseminated across the potential stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project. Primarily institutions from private and public sector have been included: centres for social work, employment offices, rehabilitation institutions, employment centres and other organisations, that in one way or another work with or include PWD. From 60 responses received, the vast majority of answers came from stakeholders from social care and education (almost 70%), followed by respondents from human resources department and social economy sphere.

45.2% of respondents declared they are working directly with PWD, whereas the rest (54.8%) they work indirectly with the target group.

2. In che modo il tuo lavoro quotidiano è collegato alle persone con disabilità (PCD)?
(Obbligatorio scegliere un'opzione)

62 odgovorov

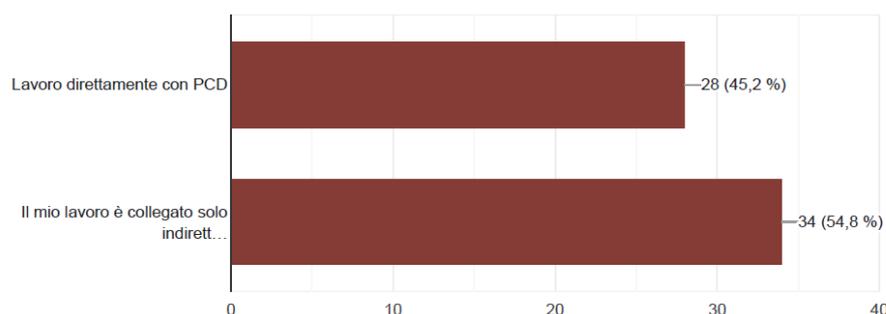


Table: 1b



95,2% of respondents (59) came from Italian organizations, and 4 answers in total came from Belgium, Germany, UK, and USA.

4. In quale paese ha la sede principale la tua organizzazione? (non obbligatorio):



62 odgovorov

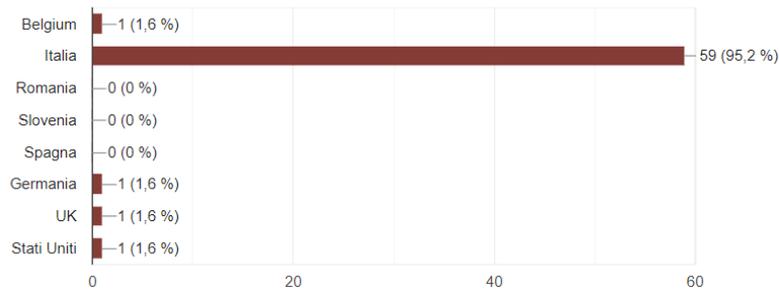


Table: 2b

Unfortunately, the elements of discrimination of PWD/PMHP are still noticed almost unanimously by the professionals responding to the survey (over 87%, summing up levels 4 and 5).

Per le seguenti affermazioni, ti chiediamo gentilmente di fornire le tue risposte, scegliendo una delle opzioni che corrispondono al tuo livello di accordo: 1 corrisponde al tuo totale disaccordo e 5 corrisponde al tuo pieno accordo con l'affermazione (1 - completamente in disaccordo, 5 - pienamente d'accordo):

a) Sebbene le diverse normative nazionali e le politiche e le strategie per l'occupazione affrontino il tema delle pari opportunità per la piena partecipazione al mercato del lavoro, in realtà si possono ancora notare elementi discriminatori quando si tratta di impiegare una PCD e/o una persona con disabilità mentale (PMD) nel mercato del lavoro aperto

62 odgovorov

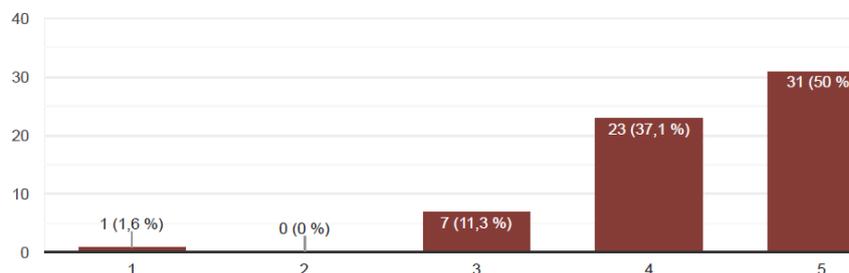


Table: 3b

The question of stigma because of MHP, present on the employer's side is even more evident, reaching the extremely worrying level of 96.8% (for levels 4 and 5).



b) La stigmatizzazione delle persone con disabilità psichica è ancora presente tra i datori di lavoro

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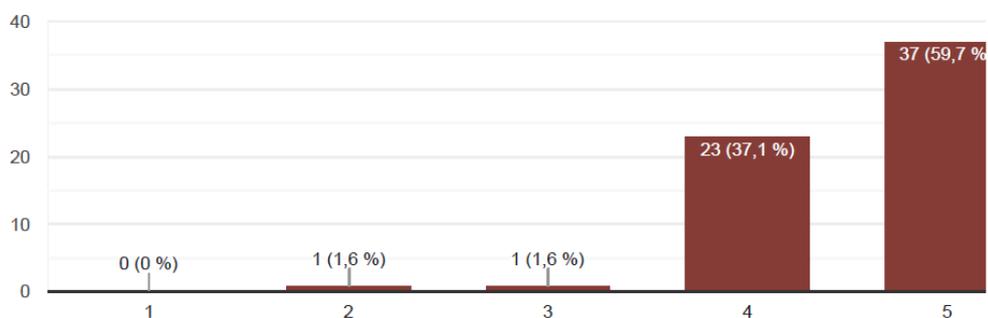


Table: 4b

On the other hand, the stigma in educational sector is evidently lower, although 51,6% still assume that the problem is evident (levels 4 and 5)

c) La stigmatizzazione delle persone con disabilità psichica è ancora presente nelle diverse istituzioni educative

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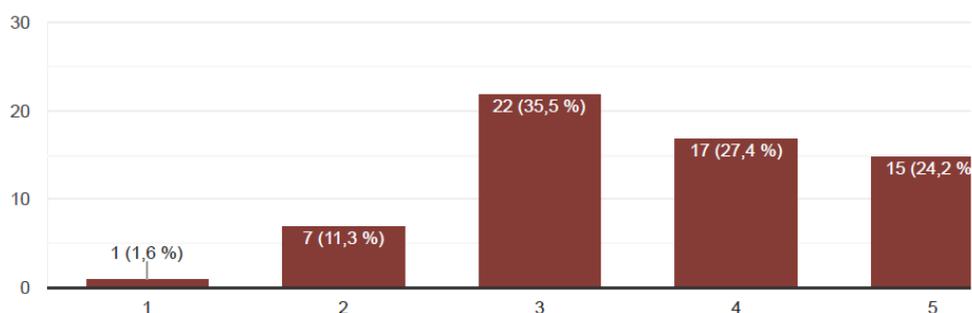


Table: 5b



When respondents were asked about the national quota system as a supportive and promotive element, supporting the inclusion in the labour market, answers still tend towards the negative extreme, with 80,6% fully or almost fully disagree with the sentence

d) L'attuale sistema nazionale di quote per l'impiego di PCD/PMD non promuove pienamente l'inclusione nel mercato del lavoro

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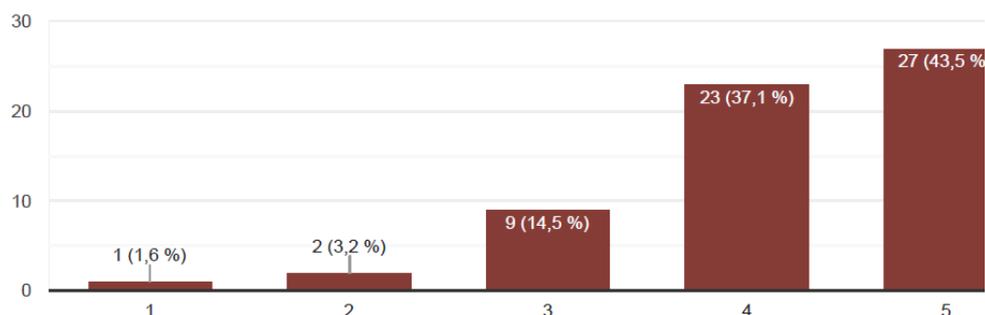


Table: 6b

Within the research about dispersion of existing services and support measures for training and retraining, available to PWD/ PMHP from the side of different organisations again the results have a tendency to full agreement with statement (over 75,8% for level 4 and 5).

e) L'offerta di formazione e riqualificazione professionale per le PCD/PMD da parte degli Enti e le Autorità risulta frammentaria e disomogenea sul territorio. Di conseguenza i servizi per l'inclusione lavorativa sono poco accessibili e non adeguatamente centralizzati

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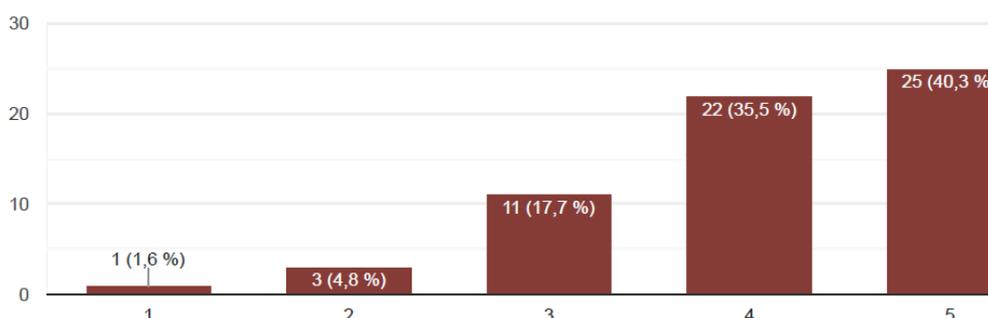


Table: 7b



Responses within the question of more adapted training and/or retraining options to increase potential of performing a freely chosen profession have the tendency to full agreement (over 80% for level 4 and 5).

f) le opportunità di formazione e/o riqualificazione e le offerte del mercato del lavoro rivolte alle PCD/PMD sono poco concrete, inadeguate, e non consentono di svolgere un'occupazione liberamente scelta

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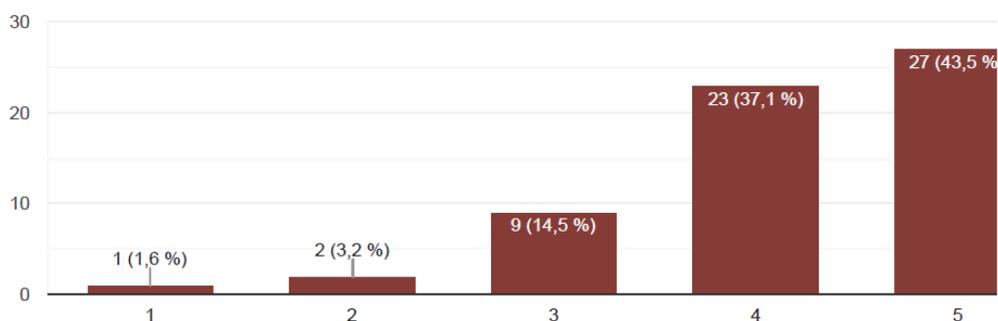


Table: 8b

When it comes down to the need of more contemporary and person-centred approach for the target group in different organisations, the responses return to reach to unanimous levels, as 91,9% completely or almost completely agree with the importance of this need.

g) È necessario un approccio più incentrato sulla persona, contemporaneo e olistico (compresi elementi di rafforzamento di competenze e corsi di formazione innovativi) nelle organizzazioni che includono PCD / PMD nelle loro attività / o le impiegano

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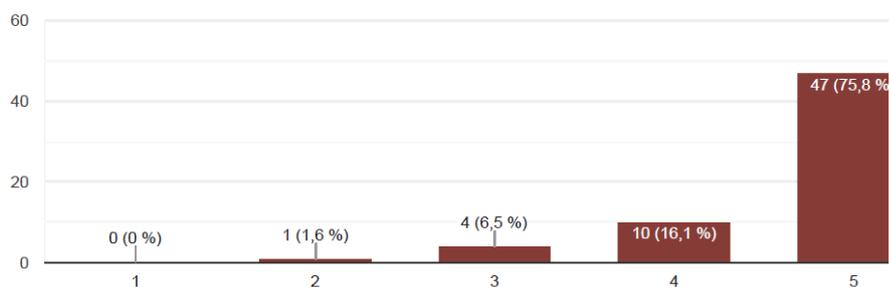


Table: 9b



Also, when evaluating the existing national opportunities for training and education programmes, the results are not encouraging as the level of agreement exceeds 83% of stakeholders answering to the survey.

h) Le offerte nazionali esistenti di formazione / formazione professionale / programmi educativi non si rivolgono nella misura necessaria anche per la PCD / PMD

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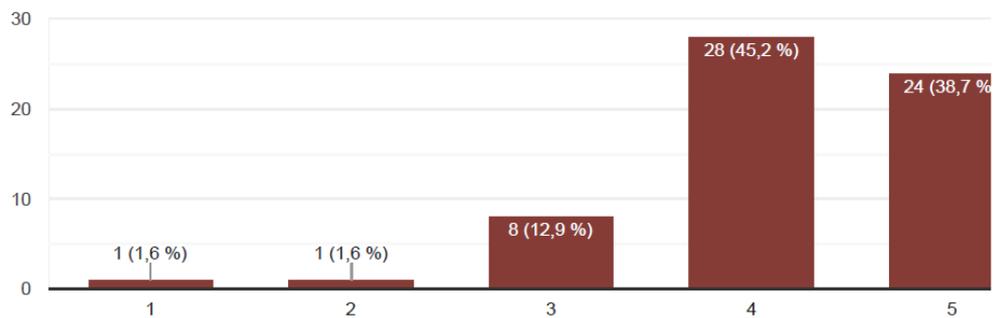


Table: 10b

There is also a common sentiment towards the need for a more person-centred planning in all activities supporting full participation on the labour market is very strong, with over 91% of respondents leaning towards full agreement (level 4 and 5).

i) Una pianificazione maggiormente individualizzata e incentrata sulla persona dovrebbe essere inclusa in tutte le attività a supporto della piena partecipazione del PCD / PMD al mercato del lavoro.

62 odgovorov

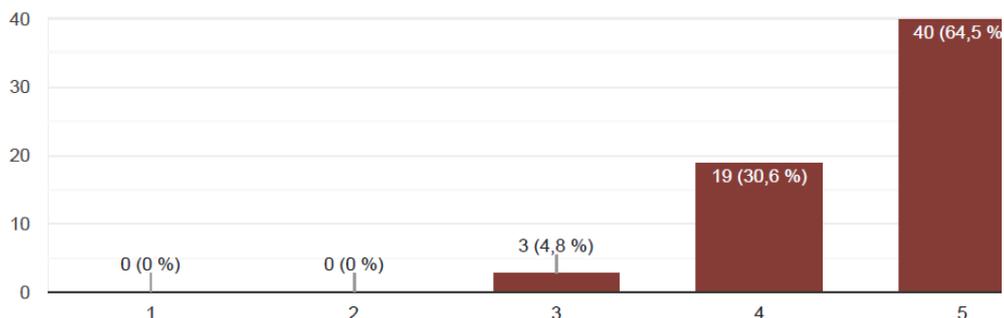


Table: 11b

Last important feature of the survey was the question related to the personal knowledge about innovative elements of training/good practice examples for bottom up approach of labour market inclusion. Italian respondents proved to be quite competent on the matter, as

41 stakeholders replied that they are aware of experiences or practices in the field of training to our target group (66,1% in total for levels 4 and 5)

j) Sono a conoscenza di approcci di formazione innovativi ed esempi di buone pratiche nel mio Paese, soprattutto quelli che promuovono un approccio dal basso verso l'alto nel campo dell'inclusione lavorativa della PCD.

62 odgovorov

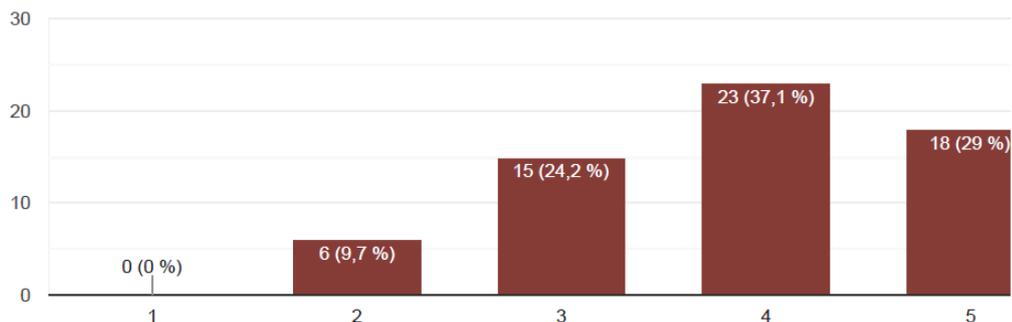


Table: 12b

Unfortunately, within the survey, the elements of discrimination of PWD/PMHP are still noticed almost unanimously. The question of stigma because of MHP, present on the employer's side is even more evident. On the other hand, the stigma in educational sector is evidently lower. The national quota system as a promotive element, supporting the inclusion in the labour market, is not enough. Existing services and support measures for training and retraining, available to PWD/ PMHP, are fragmentary. Over 80% respondents think that more adapted training and/or retraining options to increase potential of performing a freely chosen profession, are not suited. Existing national opportunities for training and education programmes are not sufficient. There is also a unanimous sentiment towards the need for a more contemporary and person-centred approach, and a person-centred planning in all activities supporting full participation on the labour market.

2.2.2 Focus groups

The Focus Group was held as a videoconference call on 11 March 2020. It was attended by 16 stakeholders plus two staff members of BES, namely Paola Baldini (President of BES) and Antonio Dell'Atti (Project Manager of ENABLE and facilitator of the focus group).

A heterogeneous group of stakeholders took part to the Focus Group, representing different points of view and interest. In particular, the following categories attended the event: large companies (human resources departments), SMEs, associations and cooperatives specifically



targeting PMD, lawyers, public authorities (in charge of welfare and social care), lawyers, psychologists.

With respect to research questions, used within the interviews, the focus group had a discussion, reflecting the below mentioned objectives:

- Current and common open questions and obstacles when it comes down to inclusion in the so called first or open labour market (regardless the national regulations in the field)
- Solution to the identified challenges and obstacles
- Training methods and tools for fostering the social and labour inclusion of PMD

After a brief introduction by each participant, discussions began on the **obstacles and challenges** of social and work inclusion of people with mental disabilities.

It is commonly believed that Italy has a good regulatory framework, both from the point of view of work inclusion and education. However, this positive view does not correspond to the proper application of both sanctions and actual compliance by companies. Several participants pointed out that companies sometimes prefer to pay penalties rather than hire disabled people, and this leads to a defeat for the regulatory system. It follows the need to sanction more those who do not abide the rules, because today avoiding labour inclusion can still be convenient from a practical point of view.

Remaining at the companies, the participants highlighted, as a problem for integration, the lack of knowledge about mental and intellectual disabilities that leads to feelings of stigma and fear in relation to the future management and relationship of PMD. In particular, there are autism characteristics that make integration more complex: sensory problems that cannot be quantified, rigidity that can sometimes seem rude, or an aggressive behaviour. And it is hard to explain to companies how to take these aspects into account.

A further negative consequence of the lack of knowledge is that, within companies, there remains a difficulty in interpreting problems encountered with PMD, as a sign of an organization's malfunction. The disabled person is blamed, and therefore the company goes to the expert to figure out what to do with him/her. Companies often do not look inside themselves and do not try to understand the problems may be within their own organizational structure.

With regard to this last point, participant companies have expressed the need to be more supported precisely in the management of PMD, who have greater adaptability problems than those suffering from physical disabilities. Companies would like to be helped both in the integration and work retention, but also in identifying the tasks suitable for them.

Within the focus group, the adaptability of the working environment was also discussed.

Nowadays, many companies are resorting to open space, but this solution for PMD can make the situation worse, because it leads to reduce attention threshold and excessive socialization. On the contrary, in smart working contexts, PMD can feel more serene, and



therefore the balance between working with other people and working remotely should be assessed.

Finally, participants have long debated the great problem of stigma and discrimination. A problem that arises at school, as there is a lack of special training for teachers who do not often know the world of intellectual and mental disabilities, and for this, they tend to think there is no remedy. While it would be useful to change the mindset of school and education world and a cultural change. We should start thinking about what a person can do and what his/her skills are and not what he/she cannot do. Otherwise the stigma will remain.

The stigma is present not only in society and companies, but also by those people and organizations that should oppose it, as they tend to “diminish” and “underestimate” the resistance of companies not to accept the inclusion of the disabled person. Behaviour that is generally not the case, when resistance is found towards a black person or a homosexual, where the social reaction is very different and stronger. As a result, discrimination and the exclusion of the disabled from the world of work is still considered “acceptable”. This first part of the focus group ended with an invitation to urge disabled people and families to report situations of injustice, as a first step in overcoming stereotypes and improving their situation.

The second part of the focus group was dedicated to **the solutions** to be adopted to solve the problems and obstacles encountered.

As already mentioned, many participants stressed the importance of the tool of work placement, but above all of providing the support of a tutor or expert, in such a way as to encourage the inclusion and break down fears related to a lack of knowledge. In this regard, it is considered essential to be able to ensure that people, who are in close contact with inserted PMD, have the opportunity to know well the context, before, during and after insertion.

In the success cases highlighted, a synergy of various factors was emphasized: a good predisposition to the welcoming of the PMD, especially to listening and the contribution that person could give; training support from the company; preparing a listening space in relation to the encountered difficulties.

Many participants, including the present public representatives, praised the role of social cooperatives in job placement and retention, describing them as the only platforms that allow serious monitoring and accompaniment of people with mental disabilities. The instrument of agreements between cooperatives and companies (art.14 Biagi law) which provides that companies can comply with the obligation not only by hiring disabled people but entrusting a



job order to a cooperative that hires disabled people, is confirmed as tool that can make a difference both in supporting companies and people to enter and maintain work.

There was also discussion on how communication can also make a difference in countering stereotypes and fostering inclusion. Today we tend to emphasize success cases, that is, when you manage to insert and/or maintain a good number of PMD in work contexts. In doing so, however, the world of disability remains in a dimension of exceptionalism. In order to reverse the trend, the issue of social and work inclusion of disabled people must be addressed as an ordinary phenomenon.

The third and final part of the focus group concerned participants' suggestions and advice regarding **methods and tools for PMD's appropriate training**, which can improve their participation in labour market, making it more satisfying and meaningful.

A first feedback was the use of storytelling. With due caution and right preparation, self-telling and autobiographical methods can be very useful to describe one's strengths and talents developed in one's life path. This brings benefits both directly to the PMD that opens up and acquires trust, and towards colleagues in the company who learn more about the person and his/her experience.

Participants further underlined that specific training on autism and/or other mental illnesses is also needed for the working team, so that they know what they are talking about, and know the specific characteristics of that autistic person. In addition, an assessment of physical environment where that person will be located should be done and create a strategy to make that person feel comfortable in the workplace and produce more.

It has pointed out that special attention should be paid to how training courses are promoted and communicated. In the past, courses have been organized without thinking about the personal situations of people with mental disabilities, or in any case autistic. Many strategies that make sense for everyone, for people with autism can be counter-productive and create confusion if not managed well by operators. Indeed, they can give an idea of inability to the person who might think to be unable. Even role plays, for example, can generate a sense of failure in people with disabilities.

When thinking about a training program, it must be recognized that people with autism or Asperger have their own specificities that should be appreciated and recognized.

Finally, it was pointed out that, at present, internships and courses organized by professional training system generally, lasting a few months, almost never open up to forms of real job placement and, actually, are subject to bureaucratic delays and the condition of allocation of funds by the public body. This model is wrong and does not consider people's needs and does not help to structure truly professionalizing paths.



List of participants

1. Alberto Balestrazzi - CEO Auticon Italia
2. Paola Barazzetta - Legal Partner Diversity & Inclusion, PwC
3. Consuelo Battistelli - Diversity Manager IBM Italia
4. Angelo Chiodi - Diosis onlus President
5. Costantino Costanzi - AFOL Milan Metropolitan City
6. Raffaella Faggioli - Psychologist, Autism Practice S. Paolo Hospital Milan
7. Valeria Guarino -Itaca Project
8. Isabella Ippoliti - Work and Organizations Psychologist, Diversity Manager
9. Haydee Longo - Lawyer
10. Giovanni Merlo - LEDHA Director
11. Stefano Morpurgo - Auticon Italia
12. Alice Nova - Auticon Italia
13. Elena Pomesano - Diversity & Inclusion Specialist, PwC
14. Simona Ravera - Auticon Italia
15. Daniele Regolo - Jobmetoo
16. Stefano Vitaloni - CELAV, Milan Municipality
17. Antonio Dell'Atti - BES Cooperativa Sociale
18. Paola Baldini - BES Cooperativa Sociale

2.2.3 Interviews

All respondents work in favour of PWD/PMD in different fields, such as Third Sector bodies, social Enterprises and social Cooperatives, Foundations, Associations, hospital centres.

Approaches used in the work are essentially oriented to:

- Design initiatives for socio-occupational placement of PWD and to enhance their skills and potential.
- Build the network of activities, associations, and territorial bodies to carry out effective actions of PWD integration in labour market.
- Put PWD at the centre of insertion pathways to optimize their resources, work and relational skills.
- Contribute to PWD unemployment problem.
- Provide companies with the most suitable PWD workers and, when PWD have particularly interesting characteristics, find companies that are the best suited to those features.
- Effectively influence on social policies to develop appropriate rules to meet the needs coming from society.



The responses unanimously show that the state of PWD/PMD work inclusion is currently not satisfactory, especially for mental disabilities, although progress has been made in the last ten years.

Law 68/99 is certainly important for promoting PWD/PMD employment. There are concrete examples of successful inclusion, but the institutions' control on the rule application and the sanction spraying is still insufficient even if, for all the respondents, it is increasing lately. Large companies are more oriented towards PWD's inclusion but in Italy most of the companies are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which on the contrary have little openness towards the PWD's inclusion. This is therefore perceived mainly as an obligation, in response to the legislation.

It is widely accepted that there is a difference in attitude between Non-Profit organizations and Profit companies that are more closed towards PWD.

Two interviewees recall the instrument of the convention ex art. 14 Biagi Law of 2003 is still little known by HR managers and poorly used. This agreement (among company, cooperative and Province) allows companies to fulfil the obligation to hire PWD/PMD without taking the worker directly into charge.

Rules in Italy provide benefits for companies hiring PWD, such as tax breaks and incentives. Law 68/99 promotes targeted placement to place the "right person in the right place". However, as the Report "Work inclusion of PWD in Italy" conducted by Labour Consultant Studies Foundation, presented in December 2019, shows, "work and social inclusion of PWD remain a distant goal to be achieved in our Country".

Obstacles to PWD/PMD work inclusion

All respondents agree that obstacles are of various kinds: economic, legal, cultural, clinical. Policies for PWD/PMD inclusion are uneven across the Country. This is because governance in Italy is very complex: the legislation in this matter gives power to Regions, then to Provinces, finally to Municipalities. Large companies find it difficult to navigate these rules. According to many (5/11), the obligation to hire is perceived as a harassment. Moreover, the reserve quota mechanism (ex. law 68/99) does not appear to be sufficient to meet the demand for work by PWD/PMD.

The most important obstacle is for all respondents, the cultural one. Companies do not know about disability, and they do not show any interest in knowing it. Companies often feel alone in managing PWD/PMD, so they do not have incentives to insert PWD.

In opinion of some (3/11), there is a lack of a system that can scientifically measure PWD/PMD potential. This contributes to the discrimination, in particular of PMD, towards which prejudice and stigma remain, despite having skills and having a very positive impact on



work, as also reported by the Disability Study Group of the EESC (European Social Economic Committee), quoted by an interviewee.

Another obstacle, reported by 3 respondents, is the recruiting method, that is to start from a job description, which in most cases will not be satisfied. In this way, PMD with great skills are excluded.

A final critical aspect, reported by all, is the poor spread of Disability Manager figure.

Challenges, solutions

For all respondents, it is necessary to impose more effectively compliance with the rules by companies, spraying sanctions, and the network of employment services, both public and private, must be strengthened in a homogeneous way on the national territory.

Someone (4/11) suggests a change of direction, moving towards the gradual abolition of the obligation to hire PWD. This would involve the challenge of remodelling the meeting between the company and PMD/PWD candidates, implementing a match between skills and needs of labour market: starting not from the job description but from PWD characteristics and skills, enhancing them. For 9/11 respondents, the Disability Manager, with facilitating function in the relationship between the worker and the environment, is helping to do so. Interesting is an interviewee idea to implement a consortium mechanism through the Chamber of Commerce to allow SMEs to have a common Disability Manager, saving costs.

For everyone is essential to strengthen the training of tutors and companies on Diversity & Inclusion, but also on the issues of social responsibility, as well as enhancing the network of operators.

For an interviewee, it is important the role of the Case Manager for taking charge of the individual inclusion path, such as the enhancement of the role of social cooperatives, valuable in PWD/PMD inclusion and accompaniment path over time.

For all respondents, new digital technologies and telework allow innovative approaches to PWD's job placement (technological tools, teleconferences, video conferencing).

Workshops and seminars are tools used to raise company awareness on Diversity & Inclusion themes and train Associations and Families.

Most respondents cite smart working as an innovative way of working and almost all respondents (and reference organizations) use social networks.

Many work with empowerment activities such as training with specific goals through tutors and consultants, and peer training paths.

Jobmetoo has entered the **online recruitment** in the Italian labour market for the first time.



It is important to include a training course that promotes the identity of PWD/PMD “worker”. The worker must internalize his/her social role in order to make his/her participation in the labour market more satisfying.

It is unanimously argued that English and technology knowledge is essential. Training should include activities on two skill levels: hard and soft skills to enable PWD/PMD to have a good relationship within companies and to collaborate with colleagues. A respondent considers coaching and empowerment pathways important for PMD.

Field training is a priority for 2 respondents, i.e. the opportunity to experiment transversal and basic skills through internships that are constantly monitored.

Many consider training for managers and businesses, accredited employment agencies for PWD/PMD’s inclusion, to be essential, on the understanding that knowledge, that is, the understanding of the disability with which one relates, improves participation in labour market.

We can summarize necessary elements for PWD training as follows:

- Enhancement of the orientations tools for the training/professional pathways that allow a systematic collection of information relating to the person’s condition, to the life quality perception and to expectations, desires, preferences, motivations, values that, as a whole, constitute the multidimensional assessment necessary to define the objectives and design an tailored support plan that develops in line with the person's life plan.
- Enhancement of the skills, the role and the figure of tutors/operators and Disability Managers to support the employment of people with disabilities. The integration path must be based on a strong integration between work and learning, with interventions for the acquisition of skills and personal and social autonomy.
- Enhancement of functions and training of “case management” through actions to accompany the person with disabilities throughout the journey, carried out in conjunction with the different actors of the network: social and health services, the family, the school, the training areas and work experimentation.

List of interviewees

1. Patrizia Alberti – HR Director, Niguarda Hospital, Milan
2. Anna Ballarino - “Scuola Futuro Lavoro”, Foundation “Un futuro per l’Asperger”
3. Paolo Bonisolli - President Social Cooperative Progetto il seme
4. Lucia Borso – Director Foundation Pino Cova
5. Paola Cordara - Consultant Consorzio Sir (Servizi in rete)
6. Valeria Guarino - Tutor Job Station - Progetto Itaca
7. Lisa Noja - Parliament Deputy- Milan Mayor Delegate for disability Policies



8. Francesco Reale – Adecco Foundation – Adecco Group
9. Daniele Regolo - Jobmetoo Founder - Recruiting Platform for disabled People and Protected Categories
10. Sergio Soli - Polo Lavoro Coordinator- SS. Carlo e Paolo Hospital, Milan
11. Andrea Valmassoi - Psychologist - Tutor service CELAV (Employment Mediaton Centre) Milan Municipality



2.3 ROMANIA

Statistics of the Romanian National Authority for People with Disabilities show that at 30th of September 2019 the total number of people with disabilities registered in Romania was 839.632 persons. Out of these persons a percentage of 97,89 % (821.939 persons) are living within their families or independently and a percentage of 2,11 % (17.693 persons) are institutionalized and are living in the public institution for social protection for adult persons with disabilities coordinated by Romanian Labour and Social Justice Ministry. Women represent 53.10% out of the total number of persons with disabilities and 72.12% have over 50 years of age.

According to the Romanian Legislation (448/2006) there are 4 levels/ degrees of disability: mild (IV), medium (III), accentuated (II) and severe (I).

The number of persons with severe disabilities is 39,60% of the total number, with accentuated disability is 49,16% of the total number and of those with medium and mild is 11,24%.¹

The law stipulates the following forms of disability assessment used in Romania:

1. Assessment of type and level of impairment/Assessment for multiple purposes (access to various disability benefits)
2. Professional assessment for people with disabilities /assessment for inclusion on the labour market - abilities to work
3. Assessment for invalidity pension/access to an invalidity/disability pension

The vocational assessment specialist assesses/explores the potential of the person with disabilities with regards to specific jobs/tasks, develops the Job-Finding Profile, the Action Plan with perspective to finding a workplace and, based on the results of the vocational assessment and exploration, recommends a specialized social service as: vocational training, assisted employment, sheltered employment or job placement services in the free market.

The occupation of a vocational assessment specialist is an autonomous occupation² in which specialists use knowledge of social assistance, psychology, law, vocational assessment and exploration techniques and tools to support people with disabilities in finding a job. Vocational assessment steps:

1. planning activities, establishing specific activities,
2. identifying the communication skills of the person with disabilities, making communication, and using feed-back for positive interrelationships,
3. establishing common objectives,
4. Analysing the results of the individual evaluation for the best service recommendation, including, for example, vocational training, assisted employment, sheltered employment or free labour market placement services,



5. Informing the person with disabilities about the best service recommendation; signing the social services contract,
6. Applying tools for the broader Vocational Assessment of the person with disabilities,
7. Identifying the appropriate social service.

The results of the initial individual assessment include:

- personalized recommendations: actions identified with the beneficiary according to the results of the assessment,
- recommendation of a service: a recommendation resulting from the initial vocational assessment of a specialized social service as appropriate: extensive assessment, training, assisted employment, sheltered employment or job placement services on the open market,
- the action plan: elaborated by the Vocational Assessment Specialist, establishing the necessary actions to be taken by the person with disability for the next steps of the job search process.

Even if the above process is performed and at the end of it the person with disabilities has the action plan, in reality for many of them it remains only a paper document done only for the fact that the law requires it but it is never implemented.

Labour market insertion of individuals with disabilities is a great challenge, especially for developing countries. For a better understanding on how to improve employment of people with disabilities in the Romanian labour market, it is essential to have in-depth knowledge of the relevant legislation based on laws, regulations, guidance, and other relevant normative acts.

In Romania, the regulatory framework is not very rigorous, effective, and diversified compared to those of other countries in European Union. Romania signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/106)³. The Convention is a human rights instrument and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. This international legislative framework has made remarkable progress in order to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. The convention established to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society⁴. The Constitution of Romania provides the main legal regulatory framework regarding protection of individuals with disabilities because citizens are equal before the law and public authorities, without any discrimination. Moreover, it is also specified



that individuals with disabilities shall enjoy special protection and the State of Romania shall provide the accomplishment of a national policy of equal opportunities, and disability prevention and treatment, so that individuals with disabilities can effectively participate in community life, while observing the rights and duties of their parents or legal guardians ⁵.

According to Law no. 448/2006 amended and completed by the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 60/2017 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, starting with 1 September, 2017, public authorities and institutions, legal, public or private persons, who do not employ persons with disabilities will have to pay monthly to the state budget an amount representing the minimum gross monthly guaranteed in payment multiplied by the number of jobs that the company did not employ persons with disabilities ⁶.

According to the same law no. 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of the disabled people (5), there are 10 types of disabilities (physical, visual, hearing, deaf-mute, somatic, mental, psychic, HIV/AIDS, associated, and rare diseases) and 4 levels/ degree of disability: mild (IV), medium (III), accentuated (II) and severe (I). The Romanian Leu, or RON, is the official currency of Romania. At the employer's level there is an impact of raising the minimum gross salary to 2280 Lei (477 euro) on the disability fund contribution paid by the employer because, according to the law, each company having at least 50 employees and that does not hire at least 4% of the total number of employees individuals with disabilities, is obliged to pay this contribution that is used by the state to protect this social category ⁷.

As an internal legislative approach, the National Council for Combating Discrimination or NCCD ⁸ is the Romanian competent and autonomous state authority, under parliamentary control, but it is politically independent which means it operates in the field of discrimination in accordance with the national and international legislation. The National Council for Combating Discrimination is a very important national authority in terms of sanctioning discriminatory behaviour in order to combat discrimination. The legislative status of NCCD is based on the Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, which was subsequently amended in 2006. The Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination with subsequent amendments provides the legislative framework in the case of discrimination. The Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination with subsequent amendments implements the Directive no. 2000/43/CE; implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, as well as the Directive no. 2000/78/CE; establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation ⁹. Practically, this normative act defines discrimination in the Romanian legislation, with direct implications for people with disabilities at risk of social exclusion, as follows: "Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race,



nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social status, belief, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, non-contagious chronic disease, HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection, membership of a disadvantaged group and any other criteria which has the purpose or the effect of restriction, elimination of recognition, use or exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms or of rights recognized by the law in the political, economic, social or cultural field or in any other field of public life.” However, the main sanctions, according to this law are very low and without major consequences to discourage relapse. The labour market in Romania is influenced by the economic and social, political system, as well as the environment, that is why the supply and demand of the labour market has had, at many times, different trends ¹⁰.

Research studies that investigated the socio-professional discrimination of individuals with disabilities in Romania and stresses that Romanian employers prefer to pay state contributions to the detriment of employing individuals with disabilities considering that their socio-professional development opportunities are far below those for a person with a normal health condition ¹¹. The phenomenon of unemployment among people with disabilities is unavoidable and also generates devastating consequences on living standards, wellbeing and quality of life. Labour market insertion of individuals with disabilities implies not only hiring them and receiving a sum of money for their work, but also integrating them into the social life of their community ¹². Currently, Romania is not involved in implementing a sustainable demographic strategy in spite of the fact that the active labour force is continuously decreasing. Empirical studies that analyses the duration of unemployment and the destinations of unemployed people registered as unemployed with disabilities in Romania and final results show that age, education and economic status have a significant influence on the probability of (re)employment of individuals with disabilities ¹³. The employment barriers faced by people with disabilities include the reluctance of employers to hire them, the small number of protected workplaces and a lower pay in comparison with the nondisabled employees in the same job position ¹⁴. The significant implications of educational level on participation in the labour market plays an essential role within policy and research on disability and inclusion considering the fact that educational level has a stronger positive effect for people with disabilities than for non-disabled people ¹⁵.

Labour market insertion of individuals with disabilities is a great challenge for any society, and especially for developing countries. Individuals with disabilities are a vulnerable population. The individuals with disabilities from Romania have to face not only the disability itself, but also the poor infrastructure, the challenges of transportation to and from the workplace, and social stigma and discrimination. These are strong reasons why many individuals with disabilities quit searching for a job or have difficulties keeping their current job. Some Romanian employers avoid hiring people with disabilities due to the necessity to adapt their working conditions to the needs of this particular group. Inequalities in income, consumption and wealth, high



poverty, social stigma and low living standards are quite common in Romania and vulnerable groups are at risk of social exclusion due to insufficient, inadequate or even absent current legislative framework. Possible effective strategies for labour market integration of people with disabilities in the case of a developing country in the EU, involve the following directions stressing on the effectiveness in the talks with the employers on the open labour market; improvement of the relations with the Unions of persons with disabilities, NGOs—Non-governmental organisations and social partners around the country, using the subsidiary principle for solving this social issue, and also finding jobs on the open labour market for people with disabilities by adapting the working place for them ¹⁶. The main fields of employment are computer operators, cleaning persons, sale assistants, bakers.

The Romanian legislation is constantly changing and adapting because the Romanian legislator has amended the general law regarding individual and collective labour relations, reforming the legal concepts and institutions in the field in order to establish more flexible legal relations between employers and employees ¹⁷. Romania has already aligned its legislation to the EU policies on combating discrimination in the case of persons with disabilities, however, the concrete results are difficult to measure.

The state agency that deals with employment of people offer courses mostly for non-disabled people. There is no government funding of Supported Employment initiatives in Romania. Supported Employment initiatives are funded and operated entirely by NGOs and private organisations for disabled people. Accordingly, this type of initiatives does not exist at the national level but only at the local/regional levels. There are only a few supported employment programs in Romania, limited to people with disabilities. No external evaluation for these programs, in accordance with supported employment practice standards is provided. Services are fragmented, actions are not coordinated between agencies, there is no integration of vocational, social care and medical services. Youths have been for a long time the prisoners of inactivity routine and benefit trap; they have little experience with real work situation and often lack both the skills and the motivation for work.

There are several nongovernmental organizations that are very active mostly in the field of somatic disabilities and offer courses for becoming sale assistant, cleaning person, computer operator.

A very active and efficient organization in fighting to prevent the isolation of people with physical disabilities is the nongovernmental organization Motivation Romania.

The employment services provided by Motivation seek to meet the need of persons with disabilities for social and professional inclusion. Thereby, organization services limit one of the most dramatic effects of disability – the isolation of the individual. The lack of a constant



occupation, the need to belong to a group, and to feel valued within that group, make the disability much more difficult to bear, causing the deterioration of individual and family well-being. The organization employment service facilitates the placement on the mainstream labour market of **persons with disabilities who can and want to work.**

Currently about 15.5% of these persons have a job. To improve the data available regarding this field, Motivation and the Romanian Academic Society completed in 2009 and 2010 the studies entitled “Diagnosis: Excluded from the labour market. Obstacles in employment of people with disabilities in Romania” and “Access to the Labour Market for Disabled People.”

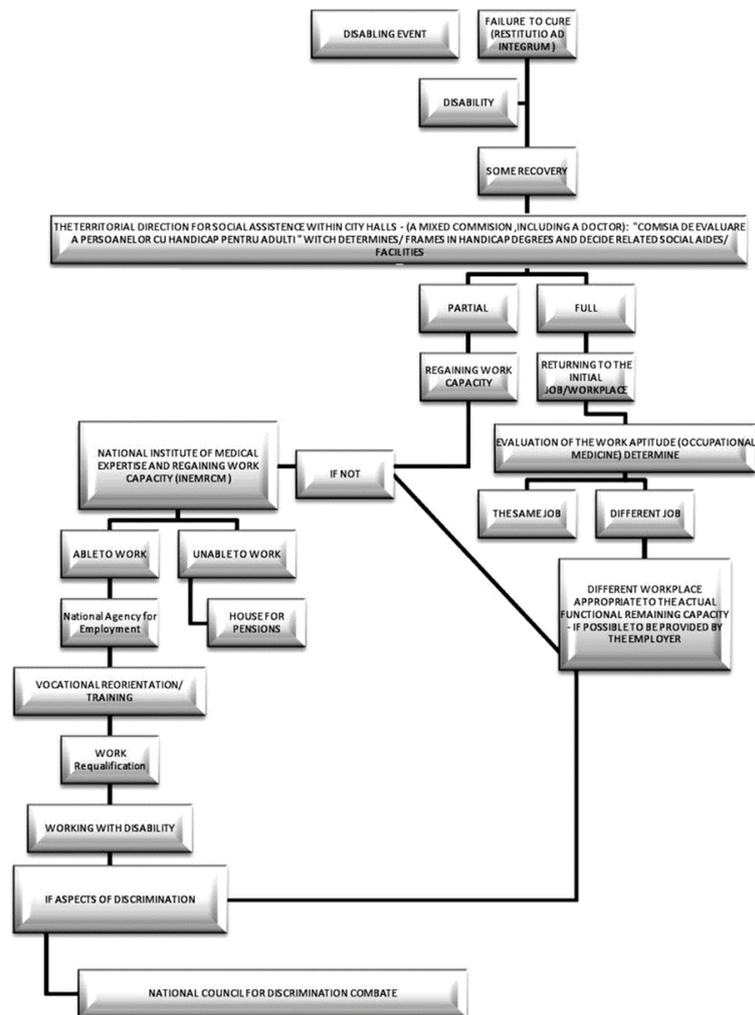
During 2009 – 2015, Motivation developed the employment service through several projects, including:

1. “MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYMENT” (2014-2015), co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013 – Investing in People!
2. “PARTNERSHIP FOR EMPLOYMENT” in regions Bucharest-Ilfov, Nord-Est and Sud-Est” (2014-2015), co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013 – Investing in People!
3. “PARTNERSHIP FOR EMPLOYMENT” in regions Bucharest-Ilfov, Sud-Vest and Sud Muntenia” (2014-2015), co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013 – Investing in People!
4. Equal chances for the integration of people with intellectual disabilities in Romania (2009-2012), co-financed by POSDRU
5. Developing the social economy (2009-2012), co-financed by POSDRU; Motivation was React Association’s partner
6. ORIZONT 2009 (2009-2012), co-financed by POSDRU; Motivation was DGASPC Sector 1 Bucharest’s partner
7. START for equal opportunities for people with disabilities on the labour market (2008 – 2011), co-financed by the POSDRU
8. Looking to the future – a chance for integration into the labour market for people with disabilities (2008 – 2011), co-financed by the POSDRU
9. Inclusion on the labour market of people with disabilities (2008-2011), co-financed by POSDRU; Motivation was ActiveWatch’s partner ¹⁸

“Pentru Voi” Foundation is one of the very few nongovernmental organizations that offer employment services for people with intellectual disabilities. The jobs that can be accessed are art decorations, tailoring, and packaging. ¹⁹



Schematically representation of the institutional circuit, covered in varying proportions after a disabling event, till the moment of the social inclusion and a possible work reinsertion in Romania is presented here:



Source of the image: Anghelescu, Aurelian & Mihai, Bușcă & Adina, Constantin & Ioana, Andone & Ana-Maria, Anghelescu & Onose, Gelu. (2016). Employment Of People With Disabilities In Romania. International Archives of Medicine. Vol. 9. 10.3823/2236.

Resources:

- 1 <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/transparenta/statistici/trimestriale/> (accessed on 20.12.2019)
- 2 Vocational assessment specialists require a specialist qualification respect to be allowed to do this job. They can have a background in any field, as long as they graduate from the professional training programme for vocational assessment specialist.
- 3 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>



- 4** United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Disability. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Available online: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/conventionon-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html> (accessed on 20.12.2019)
- 5** Constitution of Romania, Amended and Completed by the Law No. 429/2003 on the Revision of the Constitution of Romania, Published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, No. 758 of 29 October 2003, Republished by the Legislative Council on the Grounds of Article 152 of the Constitution, with the Updated Denominations and the Renumbered Texts (Article 152 Became, in the Republished form, Article 156), in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, No. 767 of 31 October 2003. Available online: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=371> (accessed on 20.12.2019).
- 6** Law no. 448/2006 amended and completed by the Government Emergency Ordinance no.60/2017 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.
- 7** Husman, A.I. Taxation of employees in Romania in 2018. Changes and its results on the country's economy. Oradea J. Bus. Econ. 2018, 3, 46–55.
- 8** National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD). Available online: <http://cncd.org.ro/> (accessed on 20 December 2019).
- 9** European Commission—European Web Site on Integration—Migrant Integration Information and Good Practices. Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/> (accessed on 12 December 2019).
- 10** Iova, A.R.; Cretu, D. Young persons insertion on the labor market. Case study in Romania and Bulgaria. Sci. Pap. Ser. Manag. Econ. Eng. Agric. Rural Dev. 2018, 18, 265–272.
- 11** Vornholt, K.; Villotti, P.; Muschalla, B.; Bauer, J.; Colella, A.; Zijlstra, F.; Van Ruitenbeek, G.; Uitdewilligen, S.; Corbière, M. Disability and employment—Overview and highlights. Eur. J. Work Organ. Psychol. 2018, 27, 40–55. [CrossRef]
- 12** Vilà, M.; Pallisera, M.; Fullana, J. Work integration of people with disabilities in the regular labour market: What can we do to improve these processes? J. Intellect. Dev. Disabil. 2007, 32, 10–18. [CrossRef]
- 13** Wolniak, R.; Skotnicka-Zasadzien, B. Developing a Model of Factors Influencing the Quality of Service for Disabled Customers in the Conditions of Sustainable Development, Illustrated by an Example of the Silesian Voivodeship Public Administration. Sustainability 2018, 10, 2171. [CrossRef]
- 14** Thomas, C. Female Forms: Experiencing and Understanding Disability; Open University Press: Buckingham, UK, 1999; 175p.
- 15** Mateescu, L.M.; Neagu, A.M. Opportunities of labour market integration for young professionals. Procedia Econ. Financ. 2014, 8, 444–452. [CrossRef]
- 16** Davey, S.; Gordon, S. Definitions of social inclusion and social exclusion: The invisibility of mental illness and the social conditions of participation. Int. J. Cult. Ment. Health 2017, 10, 229–237. [CrossRef]



17 Nenu, C.C. Labor Code Amendments—Between Necessity and the Reality of the Labor Market in Romania and in the European Union. *J. Leg. Stud.* 2012, 1, 77–86.

18 <http://motivation.ro/en/angajarea-persoanelor-din-grupuri-vulnerabile/>

19 <http://www.pentruvoi.ro/angajare-in-munca>

2.3.1 Results of online survey

Most of the survey respondents were associated with social sector and the human resources departments (48%) also education (12%) and health sectors (8%) being well represented (50 respondents participated in the survey. Most of the respondents were directly working with people with disabilities.

2. Cum este conectată munca dumneavoastră de zi cu zi de persoanele cu dizabilități ?
(este obligatoriu să alegeți o opțiune)

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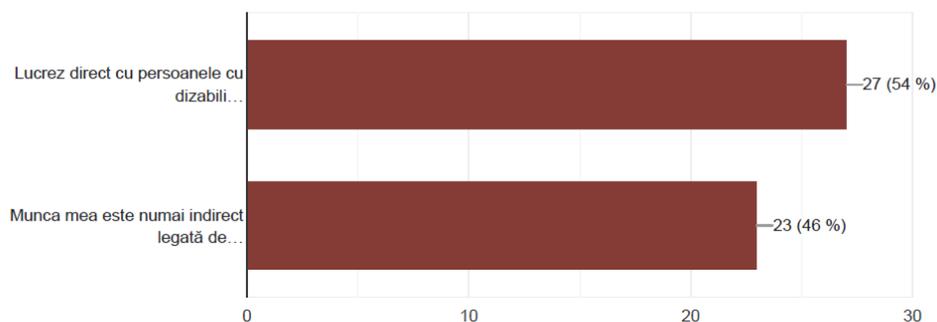


Table: 1c

All the respondents except for 1 (Denmark) out of 50 were belonging to organizations situated in Romania.

According to the answers received half of the participants strongly agree with the idea that there are still discriminatory practices that take place when it comes to the employment of people with disabilities.



5. Pentru fiecare dintre afirmațiile de mai jos vă rugăm să furnizați un răspuns încercuind un număr care să corespundă nivelului acordului dumneavoastră: 1 corespunde dezacordului total cu afirmația iar 5 corespunde acordului total cu afirmația:

a) Deși există legislație la nivel național, politici de angajare și strategii care stipulează respectarea principiului egalității de șanse în ceea ce privește participarea deplină pe piața muncii, în realitate, pot fi observate practici discriminatorii atunci când ne referim la angajarea persoanelor cu dizabilități/ persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale.

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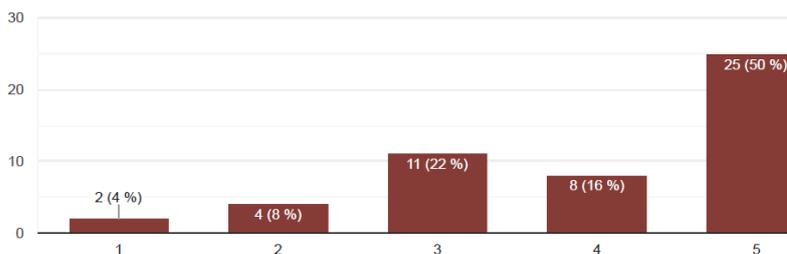


Table: 2c

The fact that 78% of the respondents agree and strongly agree with the statement that the stigmatization of PWD is present among the employers shows that there are still many difficulties in the employment of PWD and a lack of education of employers and general public.

b) Stigmatizarea persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale este prezentă în rândul angajatorilor.

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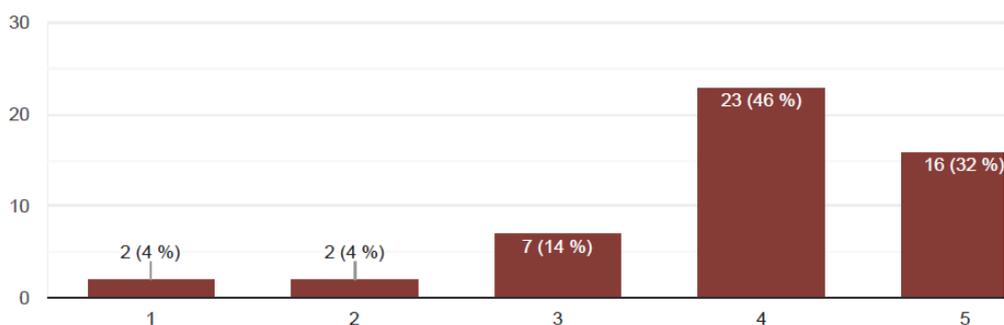


Table: 3c

The same percentage of agreement and strong agreement of 76% can be observed also in this statement with regards to the stigmatization of PWMD in the educational institutions. This as a consequence lead to both lack of education and skills that would support the people with PWMD to find a employment and at the level of society there is a missed opportunity to learn more about these people and to become more informed and tolerant.



c) Stigmatizarea persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale este prezentă în instituțiile educaționale.

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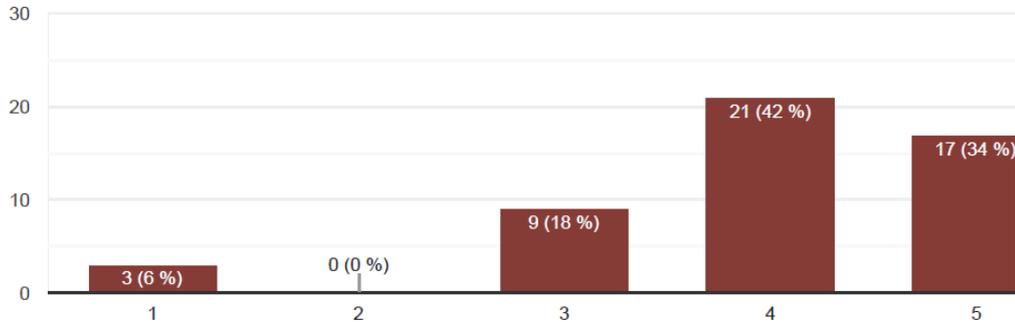


Table: 4c

At this statement that refers to the legislative obligation to hire a quota of employees from the PWD group, there is a clear strong agreement that the fines that the employers have to pay in case they do not respect the law, it is not enough to make them do it and that it is needed a supplementary or complementary measure that would support more the PWD employment.

d) Prevederea legislativă actuală prin care o cotă dintre persoanele angajate într-o instituție trebuie să fie persoane cu dizabilități, nu promovează cu adevărat incluziunea pe piața muncii a persoanelor cu dizabilități/ persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale.

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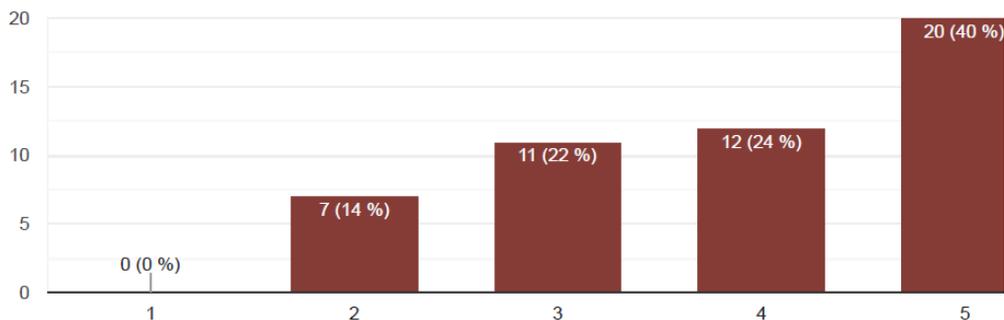


Table: 5c

It is clear that the segregation among different authorities and institutions of the services for PWD is very present at the Romanian state level and this can be clearly understood from the answers given by the respondents. This segregation lead to a dispersion of resources and a more difficult process in order to get information and support needed for getting employment on the job market.

e) Serviciile și măsurile de sprijin disponibile în prezent, oferite persoanelor cu dizabilități / persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale pentru instruire și reorientare profesională sunt împărțite între diferite autorități și organizații.

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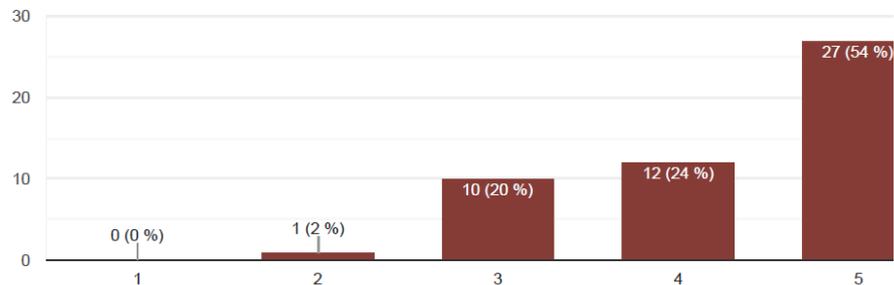


Table: 6c

At this statement we have the highest number of people that agree and strongly agree with the statement that there is a lack of training and /or retraining services adapted to the needs of PWD and that would be systematically offered to those. The Romanian Agency for Workforce Employment offers a very limited number of courses that can be accessed by PWD and they do not offer job support services once the person succeeds to get employment, that leads to a reduced rate of the job retain.

f) Există o lipsă a serviciilor de instruire și/ sau reinstruire adaptate nevoilor, care să fie sistematic oferite persoanelor cu dizabilități / persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale pentru a crește șansa acestora de a se pregăti într-o profesie aleasă de ele și de a se angaja pe piața muncii.

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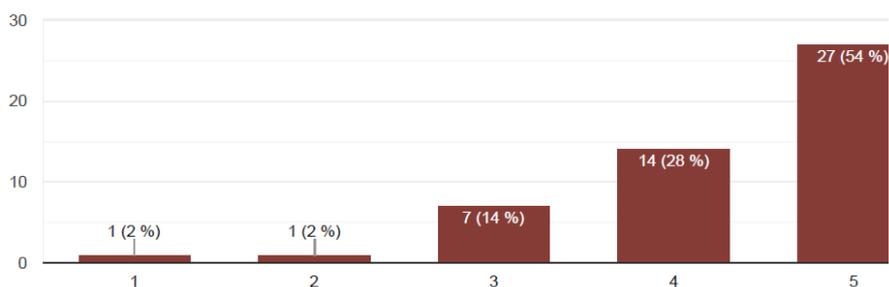


Table: 7c

There is a strong agreement with this statement which is complementary to the previous statement and also adds the need for supplementary job training besides the job content, such as empowerment and innovative methods of training that meet the needs of people with disabilities.



g) O abordare contemporană, holistică și centrată pe persoană care să includă elemente de împuternicire a persoanei și de instruire inovativă este necesară în cadrul organizațiilor care angajează persoane cu dizabilități/ persoane cu dizabilități mintale

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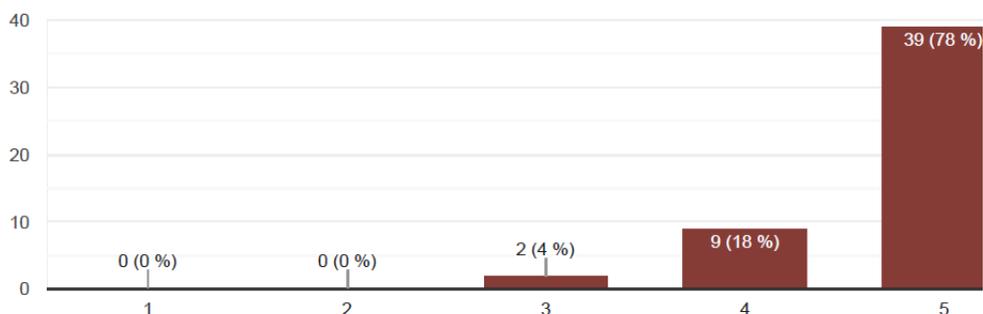


Table: 8c

This statement represents a reality that is confirmed by 82% of the respondents (32% agree and 50% strongly agree). There are more steps to be done in order to achieve an education and training systems that will allow PWD to get the skills and knowledge to have equal chances on job market.

h) Programele naționale existente în prezent de instruire profesională și/sau educațională nu răspund nevoilor persoanelor cu dizabilități / persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale, nu sunt adaptate și centrate pe persoană și nu au elementele inovative necesare pentru a facilita accesul pe piața muncii.

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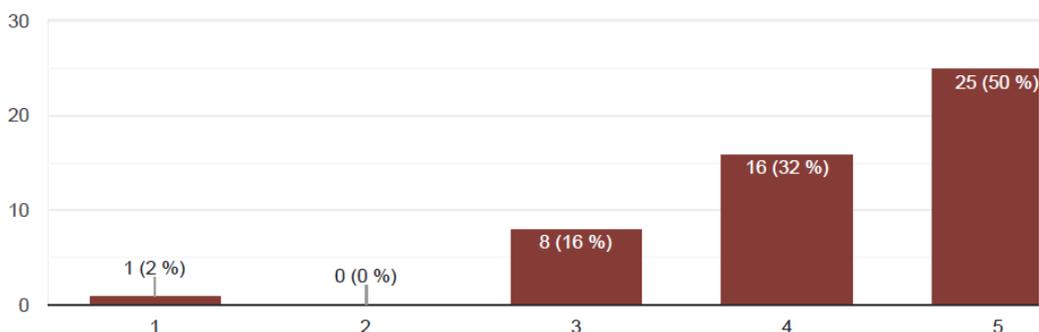


Table: 9c

The tailoring of education, training, job employment programs is really needed for each PWD and this is reflected in the answers received, the agreement in this respect being overwhelming 94%. (22% agree and 72% strongly agree).



i) O planificare individualizată, centrată pe persoană trebuie inclusă în toate activitățile care sprijină participarea deplină a persoanelor cu dizabilități/ persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale pe piața muncii.

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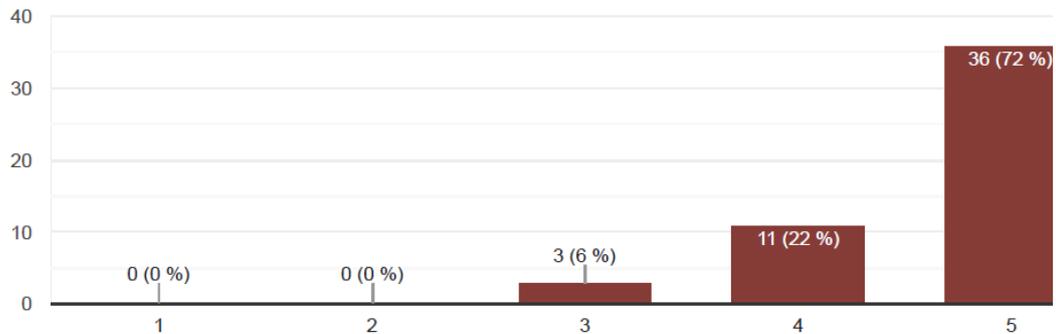


Table: 10c

The answer to this question shows that there is still a huge need of information about good practices in innovative training services with an inclusive approach, this being a very good way of educating people about the way to include PWD in their workplaces.

j) Am informații cu privire la existența în țara mea, a unor servicii de instruire inovative și care sunt exemple de bune practici, acestea promovând o abordare incluzivă a persoanelor cu dizabilități/ persoanelor cu dizabilități mintale pe piața muncii.

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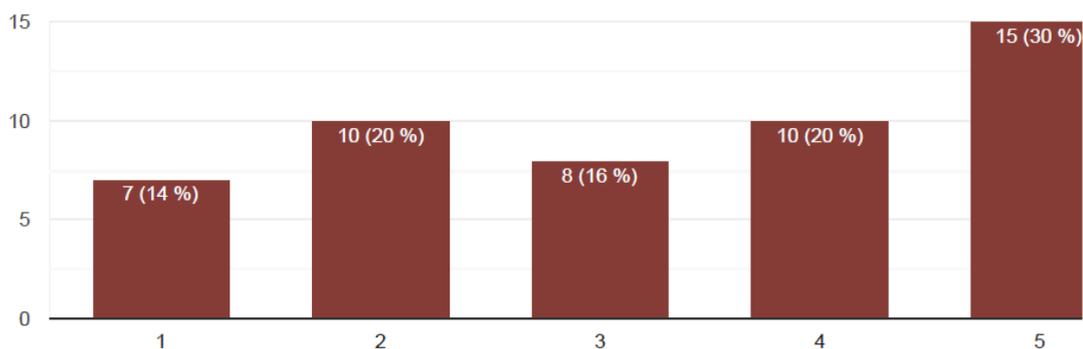


Table: 11c

Compared to what the country report has found, the survey above practically confirmed all the aspects with regards to the situation of education of PWD and the employment opportunities and inclusion in the open job market.

In conclusion, there are still many steps to be done with regards to the real access to education of PWD which would allow them to get the skills and knowledge to get employment, as well as there is a real need for the development of innovative and inclusive training and/or retraining programs which are not offered in a systematic manner to people with disabilities.

2.3.2 Focus groups

Within the focus group, the following experts participated:

- Camelia Dragomirescu – Clinical psychologist, expert in evaluating the degree of disability for the Social Protection Commission that establishes the degree of disability and the social benefits in Romania
- Tiberiu Rotaru Anghelescu – Clinical psychologist, Director of Siret psychiatric hospital, Suceava County
- Rodica Bilinschi – Social Worker, Siret Psychiatric Hospital, Suceava County
- Loredana Avramiuc – Coordinator of centre for Social Assistance Siret, Suceava County
- Carla Bilinschi – Student in medicine, volunteer in an association working with people with disabilities
- Mihaela Baragan – disability expert, Founder of the Romanian National Association of Miastenia Gravis
- Diana Stanculeanu – Psychotherapist, expert in parental education
- Raluca Nica – Psychologist, director of the Romanian League for Mental Health

Even if the Ministry of Education has a strategy for inclusive education, in reality the schools are not equipped to receive the children with disabilities and the reality is that many of these children do not have a real opportunity to get the necessary education knowledge and skills to be able after graduation to get employment.

An important issue would be the flexibilization of the legislation for people with disabilities in order to allow them to get employment even if they receive social benefits and do not limit them to a certain number of hours and days in relationship with their degree of disability. There is a lack of evaluation and career orientation which should be done by a multidisciplinary team. This would allow the PWD's to understand what their abilities and preferences are and their capabilities to get a job that meet all these. Also, there is a need for support before employment, during employment process and after getting the employment so that the persons find the job, get the job, and retain the job.



There is a need for a paradigm change to use the perspective of the abilities of people with disabilities and get rid of the disability perspective as “there is no person that cannot do anything, of course, with additional support when needed”. Assistive technologies are present in our lives and can give essential support so that a person achieve his/her maximum potential.

Education and training of employers for accepting a person with disability is another issue that should be tackled. Stigma is another issue that has to be overcome from the employers, team members and members of the general public.

Legislation with regards to the necessity of getting the medical proofs in order to get the disability benefits should be modified and these medical proofs should be waived for people with chronic and severe disabilities so that the person in this situation does not lose time in going to hospital and hinder their possibilities to get employment.

Legislation has some incentives for employees that would support the idea of employing people with disabilities.

A strength of that Romania has, refers to well-educated specialists in the disability area but who are not very much encouraged to assume the role of supporters for people with disabilities. They can be found especially in the nongovernmental organizations working with and for people with disabilities.

Examples of good practices are brought by the multinationals in Romania and they have policies for equal opportunities and equal chances for the employment of people with disabilities.

An important opportunity for people with disabilities is the area IT&C that allow persons to work from home. We have a huge need for people in the area (programmers, Internet advertisers, marketing on social networks) and there are many new jobs that could be performed by people with disabilities. We have to provide more education and training for PWD in this area.

Training in additional areas such as support regarding functional autonomy, management of time, motivation regulation, difficult emotion regulation, in the socio-emotional area and without these any technical competence cannot be used in an optimal way.

Training should also be provided in agreement with the demand for jobs from particular areas as there is a nonsense to give training in jobs that are not requested in the job market.

Another aspect that should be covered is the education of the families because especially in the rural areas PWD are totally dependent on their family because families should be educated in the sense that the PWD should become independent and autonomous.



The best equipped person with disabilities is a person with education and self-autonomy so that he/she can live an independent life as much as possible.

2.3.3 Interviews

In Romania, the following professionals were interviewed for our overall country report. The narrative report and findings are gathered for each professional separately.

1. Francisc Simon, President of the National Organization of People with Disabilities (ONPHR), volunteer in the disability area since 1990

Starting from a scratch, ONPHR has developed through its branches workshops and inclusion in the labour market of the people with disabilities, investing much time, effort, time and energy in training especially courses (IT; hairdresser, cook) but during years those services have disappeared.

Unfortunately, the legislation in this area has been modified several times and the employment of people with disabilities, in august 2017 through the Government Ordinance the protected workshops for people with disabilities belonging to NGOs or private companies were closed. This was a huge step back for these people, all the investment made by ONPHR and other organizations was lost as these people could not perform their job anymore. This ordinance has limited a lot the employment of people with disabilities. The rate of employment of PWD has decreased a lot, there is no data but the information we have shows that many people who were employed now are only beneficiaries of social benefits.

Training required: I think that it is important for PWD to have good communication skills in order to easily and better integrate in the labour market.

It is important also to know their right so that they will not be discriminated, and they will benefit of equal chances to access the labour market.

2. Mihaela Lucia Bărägan, disability expert, Founder of the National Association of Myasthenia Gravis

I work with people with disabilities that have “invisible” disabilities, mainly diseases such as myasthenia gravis. For those persons, life is more complicated compared to those with visible disabilities.



One of the problems is that PWD do not benefit from a career orientation services so that PWD are not aware of the abilities, educational and physical capacity, preferences and talents so that they can orientate themselves towards fulfilling these features they have. Instead they orientate themselves towards careers that either are not requested on the labour market or they do not have enough capacities and abilities to meet the requirements of the job. A difficulty in the legislation is that the employers require a proof from the family doctor that they are able to work which contradicts the real situation of the PWD.

Evaluation and orientation performed by a multidisciplinary team that presents and counsel the PWD so that the person can choose an area that meet the personal preferences and abilities of the PWD.

Training required: To get more access to labour market one of the most important services is the shadow person that support for a period the person in getting to the job, in relating to colleagues and understand the task.

Role models of PWD with severe disabilities are an excellent way of instilling hope for PWD.

3. Camelia Dragomirescu, clinical psychologist, expert in evaluating the degree of disability for the Social Protection Commission that establishes the degree of disability and the social benefits in Romania &
4. Sorin Iorga, clinical psychologist, expert in evaluating the degree of disability for the Social Protection Commission that establishes the degree of disability and the social benefits

They work with people with psychiatric disabilities and people with pulmonary disabilities, she is performing the evaluation for both groups in order to be presented to the National/County level Commission for obtaining the degree of disability and get the social benefits.

She also works much with PWD that are from rural area and I can say that for them the situation is really difficult but there are not that many opportunities so they have very little chances to get a job, very often they work for free either for the benefit of the community or for people who need them.

A very important observation is that as evaluation specialists are requested to evaluate the disability of PWD but not requested to evaluate the ABILITIES of PWD they have so that they can use them in order to overcome their difficulties given by the disability.

Training required: As training they need support for the adaptation period (learning the job content, learn to relate with the colleagues and superiors, learn to face the difficult situations) as they require a lot of support in that period in order to be able to adjust to the job requirements and maintain the workplace.

5. Gabi Mihaela Comănescu, Training Manager, Motivation SRL

One of the activities covered by Motivation SRL is the employment of people with disabilities: looking for jobs on the job market and looking for people with all types of disabilities that meet the requirements of the jobs and the facilitation of inclusion of PWD in the job market. The highest frustration appears when you have jobs and there are PWD who want employment but they do not meet the job requirements so you cannot overlap the two databases. One study done in cooperation with a specialized NGO, showed that the most important difficulty for PWD in getting a job is the lack of education that lead to getting the necessary skills and knowledge for a job. A success story is the cooperation with a multinational company that contracted Motivation SRL in order to support them get PWD for the jobs they offer. The cooperation between the two is going very well and PWD get and maintain employment with this multinational company with Motivation SRL support. Factors that improved the situation of inclusion of PWD in job market are: NGOs through their programs and services, structural funding from EU for PWD inclusion. The change of the legislation in 2017 (Ordinance 60/2017) with regards to protected workshops for PWD, had as a positive result in the following months, a higher interest of employers in employing PWD in order to avoid the penalties that got higher.

Training required: personal development and finding motivation for employment, increasing self-esteem, assuming responsibility of looking and maintain a job, finding motivation to get a job, work culture elements (teamwork, respect work program, relating to your superior and colleagues).

6. Rodica Bilinschi, Social worker at Siret Psychiatric Hospital, Suceava County, Romania

She works for 20 years with PWD 80% with mental disability and 20% psychiatric disability. The degree of inclusion of PWD is very low, about 2-3% out of the get a job in an area of Suceava county. An important obstacle is the stigma associated with mental/psychiatric disability, in the case of the persons who really want to get a job we intervene and advocate for the people to get the job. After they are employed, we have a period when we support the newly employed by working with them day by day in order to get the job requirements but also to know how to relate with the others.

Training required: skills for independent life, empowerment, communication skills, how to face new/difficult situations.

7. Mihaela Cira, Director of Care Services at Siret Psychiatric Hospital



She works for 18 years in the hospital, with people with mental disabilities and psychiatric disabilities. She appreciates that the stigma associated to the diagnostics leads to the rejection of these people by the potential employers. Other difficulties are that many of those who are living on social benefits if they want to get employment either they fear that they lose the social benefits, or they do not get enough support from their families. The job market is also very limited in its offer in general and especially in the Suceava area. A way to offer jobs would be to have protected workshops but there are very few initiatives.

Training needed: communication skills, how to ask a question or a request to someone unknown, how to ask for help when you have a new situation in your job.

8. Ramona Jibu, psychiatric nurse, Siret Psychiatric Hospital

She has 23-year experience of work with people with mental disabilities and psychiatric disabilities. The development of job market and employment of PWD was a very slow one and has not had much progress. The things have evolved in the sense that even if PWD are not employed in the open market, they still have the possibility to do home activities which is important because they have a preoccupation. Many of the people who have a diagnosis and they are hospitalized, need support to get back in their jobs and the Agencies for Work Force Employment does not offer this service. Also, a service for supporting those who can work from home (hand crafts, wooden crafts) for selling these products. A service for finding jobs, matching the jobs with the PWD skills, additional training in areas where there are deficits of content training.

Training needed: socialization skills, communication skills, where to ask for support when you have a problem, independent life skills.

9. Diana Stanculeanu, psychotherapist, expert in parental education for children and adolescents with psychiatric disabilities

During the last 30 year there is some progress made: the legislation that is aligned to the EU standards but at the implementation level there are still many things to be done. A high number of children with disabilities (CWD) do not have access to education which from start limit them in developing a professional competence. Another difficulty is stigma and emphasizing the limits rather than on the capacities and possibilities they have so that they can become employable.

Training needed: practical competences but aligned with lifestyle of PWD, functional autonomy and emotional abilities. Self-knowledge, self-esteem development, identification of



difficult emotions (frustration, anger, sadness) and emotion regulation skills, motivation regulation skills. Coaching, mentoring and supervision for PWD for a period after the integration on job market.

10. Tiberiu Rotaru, Manager Siret Psychiatric Hospital, Suceava County, Romania

Clinical Psychologist, working for over 20 years with PWD. Overall the situation with regards with PWD has improved, especially in the area of the rights of PWD and the legislation that is ok but in reality due to stigma and also the information and education of employers and general population, the implementation of the legislation is difficult. There is another problem that adds, in order to get social benefits, the PWD has to get many papers and constitute a file for the Social Protection Commission. The process for getting the file takes 1 year and afterward the person is afraid to get a job because the benefits are suspended, and it takes another year to get them back if the PWD cannot maintain employment. It is mainly about two things: the motivation of PWD of getting employment and the support services. NGOs are offering support services and it is important that they got support from qualified specialists, psychologists, social workers.

Training needed: How to find a job, how to do your CV, to have a job interview, what a workplace supposes and the rules that govern the job, social skills.



2.4 SLOVENIA

In the field of disability care, the Republic of Slovenia, with the desire to improve the life and social inclusion of persons with disabilities, has adopted a number of new regulations relating to different areas of life and work of persons with disabilities. Slovenia was among the first countries in the world to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adopted an action program for its implementation. The main legislative documents addressing the field of disability in connection to research specifics of ENABLE project are¹:

- *“Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami”* - The Law on the guidance of children with special needs is regulating special guidance for children with special needs who, in order to successfully participate in the education process, need appropriate education programs and provide various ways and forms of assistance.²
- *Zakon o pokojninskem in invalidskem zavarovanju* - Pension and Disability Insurance Act whereby the pension and disability insurance in the Republic of Slovenia is compulsory and uniform for all who meet the statutory conditions for insurance.³
- *Zakon o zaposlitveni rehabilitaciji in zaposlovanju invalidov* - Law on Employment Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled People which regulates the right to vocational rehabilitation and certain employment issues of persons with disabilities and sets out other forms, measures and incentives for their employment and the way in which they are financed.
- *Zakon o uporabi slovenskega znakovnega jezika* - Law on the Use of the Slovene Sign Language that regulates the right of deaf persons to use the Slovene sign language and the right of deaf persons to be informed in the techniques adapted to them, equal inclusion of deaf persons in the living and working environment, etc.
- *Zakon o izenačevanju možnosti invalidov* - Law on Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities with the main aim of preventing and eliminating discrimination based on disability and to create equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in all areas of life.
- *Zakon o socialnem vključevanju invalidov* - The Social Inclusion of Disabled Persons Act that regulates the rights and procedure for obtaining the status of disabled persons with permanent congenital or acquired disabilities who cannot socially integrate into the



community without provided social inclusion services and cannot act and function independently perform in most or all of life activities.

Although all previously mentioned legislative documents are regulating a vast majority or spectrum of different rights, social inclusion and education promotion, retraining and rehabilitation opportunities, it is important to observe some practical aspects that derive from the regulatory such as:⁴

- Quota system and incentives for employing people with disabilities

The quota system is set out in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Act, effective since January 2006, laying down an obligation on employers who have at least 20 employees to employ a certain percentage of people with disabilities. The percentage of the mandatory proportion of disabled employees is determined by the Decree on designation employment quotas for the disabled and ranges from 2% to 6% depending on the type of major activity for which the company is registered.

The obligation within the quota system can be fulfilled either by:

- a) employing persons with disabilities,
- b) taking care of substitute fulfilment of the quota (replacement quota), i.e. concluding a contract on business cooperation with the employment centre, respectively a disability enterprise,
- c) payment of a contribution to promote the employment of persons with disabilities into a special national Disability fund.

Regarding the aspect of promoting equal employment opportunities, the system is rewarding employers who exceed the quota and these incentives include i.e. also financing job position adjustments costs.

- Employment Rehabilitation

Employment Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Employment Act defines rehabilitation as a right of the disabled. It represents a set of services with which the employability of the disabled person is increased by having the opportunity in training for work, to be employed, retain the current job position or to modify or pursue (a new) professional career. PWD's are eligible for vocational rehabilitation in cases where under other regulations, they are not entitled to the same rehabilitation services and if they meet the statutory criteria. A PWD, as service user of occupational rehabilitation, is treated as an equal (team/employee) member in the process of vocational rehabilitation thus developing



the sense of belonging, participation and co-responsibility in the rehabilitation process. Employment rehabilitation is performed as a public service.

- Supportive employment

Supportive employment as such is a special concept of employing people with disabilities in an integrative working environment within ordinary/regular employers and is based on assurance and providing professional support to the disabled, working environment and employer. It is defined in the Employment Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act. Special support is foreseen within this mode, whereby both employer and the work environment are entitled to professional support (information and counselling). Also there are some special conditions for such a model: it includes only disabled person for whom the Employment Service of Slovenia issued a decision on employability in supportive employment (obtained disability status), decision on employability in supportive employment, completed process of employment rehabilitation, elaborated individualized plan of support for the disabled person and the willingness of employer for cooperation and adaptation of the working environment and work position prepared within mentioned individualized plan), the disabled person is qualified to perform work in a specific job, is motivated, an individualized support plan for the disabled person and the employer is drawn up, employer is ready to work together and adapt the work environment and the workplace with an individualized support plan.⁵

- Protective or sheltered employment

Protective employment is the employment of a disabled person in the workplace and in a working environment adapted to the work ability and needs of the disabled person who is not employable in a normal workplace (protected workplace). This type of employment is very much connected to special type of economic entities operating as Employment Centres; they are a legal entity established for the sole purpose of employing persons with disabilities in sheltered workplaces and has to fulfil specific measure in staffing, organizational, technical and other conditions prescribed by the Minister responsible for disability protection and a fore prepared business plan. Municipalities are responsible for promoting the establishment and operation of employment centres in their area.

Especially Employment Rehabilitation has more specified options for PWD; it includes special and tailor-made approaches for training/retraining and possible upskilling. On one hand Employment rehabilitation services already include counselling, empowerment, and motivation towards taking an active role in life; supporting and advising in manageable



vocational goals and orientation, development of social skills, professional support in retraining and education.⁵

On the other hand, when considering the point of view from concrete HR departments in different companies (no matter the type) the situation in practice can differ. The national leading experts in rehabilitation processes positioned an interesting article (Brecelj, Vidmar, Boštjančič, 2014) already in 2014, tackling the topic of career planning of PWD, examining the relation between wishes and obstacles. It is interesting that in Slovenia the understanding of disability itself is shifting from traditional medical understanding towards holistic understanding and conception that comprises all aspects of an individual. The article also mentions the contemporary theories of career development that established an uprising of interconnectedness of career and self-perception, personal development, personal life, and personal decisions.⁶

Within a special reporting, done each year on governmental level, explanatory notes to national funding are explained in more detail (efficiency and effectiveness of public spending – employment boosting activities, active employment policies and training, etc.). One part of the latter also includes employment market and working conditions. Within the latter there is also a preliminary explicitly defined goal that was monitored - ensuring equal opportunities for PWD in the labour market. The results show that from 2012 till 2018 the planned measures were achieved. However, the explanatory note includes some important information. The success of (vocational) training, employment, retainment of employment and career development or career change are lower within groups that suffered physical or mental defect or illness in general. By the end of 2018, only 3,84% among 100% of all employed population was represented by employed PWD's. Disability companies as means of social economy, employment centres and supportive employment remain the position of main employee's organisation/employment situations for the target groups.⁷

Financial benefits and support to PWD's differ – if a person is in rehabilitation, the remuneration of different costs is available to a person: public transport, financial remuneration for the time of rehabilitation process running (40% of minimum wage if the services are applied in a minimum of 100 hours and if the PWD is not entitled to financial substitution of financial support regulated under special rights for unemployed persons or regulations in the field disability insurance). Also, already gained rights (i.e. financial support connected to short time financial subsistence as a newly registered unemployed - not the same as social financial subsidy/benefits), like i.e. disability compensation benefit, are a remaining right of PWD if he/she is employed for the working time, shorter than full 40-hour weekly working time.⁵



All in all, the systemic approach tries to regulate full inclusion and participation. On the other hand, the concern of a slow but steady rising in unemployment rates of PWD within the whole population of unemployed is still there.⁷

The already mentioned article from Brecej et al. (2014) also showcases some concrete information about inclusion in the labour market. Results from a special survey, done with 243 unemployed PWD included in rehabilitation services (36 years as average age) has shown an interesting feature within the reasons of choosing a career as over 63% of the respondents were motivated by personal wishes and interests. The obstacles for career planning and career development are still there and can be classified as⁶:

- Internal (self-perception about appropriateness of a position, working skills and conception of concrete expectations within specific vocations)
- External (support of the environment and job placement)

At the same time, the article mentions other researchers (Fabian, Beveridge and Ethridge) within their studies, who also report on PWD's perception when finding a way back to world of work – lack of information or insufficient skills for deciding about personal careers.⁶

Moreover, when considering practical aspect of the obstacles, there is also a notable discrepancy between accessibility of educational system and job market inclusion. Whilst the educational system offers many options for inclusion in formal studies (also with adjustment of the study process) and as well on Higher education level, the practical aspect of employment activation of PWD unfortunately comes along with a bitter fact – PWD are confronted with prejudice, stereotypes and also fears on the employers side. Young, educated persons are confronted with long-term unemployment event though trained and educated; the mentioned discrepancy includes also the fact, that when in schooling, many adaptations are possible for PWD but concrete performance of a job, one was trained for, is in reality almost impossible.⁹

Disability companies retain the position of being one the most important sectors for employment of PWD employment. At the end of 2018, the Register of Disability companies registered 143 of such entities; from these 131 operated in the private and 12 in the public sector. These companies were engaged in manufacturing (51%). Otherwise, the labour market itself does not limit the free will of a PWD to search for work in any sector, but barriers exists and have been mentioned previously.⁸

The Slovenian Action plan for PWD 2014 – 2021 clearly defines several elements, describing more concretely what has already been achieved and what the goals for full inclusion are till



2021. The document also includes action plan for achieving the results and improvements on different areas with connection to current regulation already in action, together with suggestion on how to achieve the goals.¹⁰

Educational system in the country includes the principle of guidance for children, minor and young adults with special needs. An all-inclusive approach is in force with special part for adults over 21 years of age and up to 26 years within the continuing education and tailored vocational and professional programmes.¹⁰

The Law on the Targeting of Children with Disabilities also includes children, minors and young adults with special needs and, exceptionally, adults over 21 up to and including 26 years of age who are continuing education in tailored vocational and professional programs with the same educational standard and professional education with an equivalent educational standard and special rehabilitation programme, as well persons in the same age as mentioned, who can be enrolled in the program of education and training for adults, that is part of a special program for children with moderate, severe and heavy intellectual disability (these are children with intellectual disabilities, blind and partially sighted children, or children with impaired visual function, deaf and hard of hearing children, children with speech and language disorders, physical handicapped, long - term sick, with learning disabilities, autism, emotional and behavioural disorders requiring personalized exercise education programs with additional professional assistance or tailored education programs and education or special education programs).¹⁰

Within the goal of fostering employment of PWD concrete measures are planned and performed such as i.e. full participation in the “Active employment policy” measures and long-life career guidance.

In reality, the problem of discrepancy between world of work and education however remains.

The problematic area in HR departments of different companies remains the lack of concrete guidelines within a career development of a PWD – this element should be placed as a strategic entity in organisations. The long-life learning and adult education do not exclude – but the shift should be done with a notion, that all parties should come together. Empowerment of PWD in terms of upskilling, ICT use and any activity for personal development is important; public interventions, CSO awareness campaign fighting prejudice and presenting equality and all potential of PWD are important – knowledge and awareness in the end is power for both employees and employers.



Resources:

- 1 Pravno informacijski sistem Republike Slovenije (2020). Retrieved from: <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/#>
- 2 Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.zrss.si/onas/usmerjanje-otrok-s-pp>
- 3 Zavod za pokojninsko in invalidsko zavarovanje Slovenije. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.zpiz.si/cms/?ids=content2019&inf=1192>
- 4 Brumnič – Smrekar, T. et al. (2009). Kaj mora o zaposlovanju invalidov vedeti vsak delodajalec? : od davčnih olajšav za delodajalce do smernic po zakonodaji Evropske unije. Retrieved from: http://www.ir-rs.si/f/docs/RR/smernice_vlozni_listi.pdf
- 5 Zakon o zaposlitveni rehabilitaciji in zaposlovanju invalidov. (2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO3841>
- 6 Breclj, B., Vidmar, G., Boštjančič, E. (2014). Načrtovanje kariere invalidov – želje in ovire. Retrieved from <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/AndragoskaSpoznanja/article/view/2971>
- 7 Ministrstvo za finance. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MF/Proracun-direktorat/Drzavni-proracun/Zakljucni-racun/2018-ZR/03-Obrazlozitev-politik/10-Trg-dela-in-delovni-pogoji.pdf>
- 8 Statistični urad Republike Slovenije. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/News/Index/8355>
- 9 Vrbnjak, T. (2019). Zaposlovanje invalidov: Več let iščejo službo. In potem obupajo. *Večer*. Retrieved from: <https://www.vecer.com/zaposlovanje-invalidov-vec-let-iscejo-sluzbo-in-potem-obupajo-10070829>
- 10 Ministrstvo za delo, družino in socialne zadeve. (2014). *AKCIJSKI PROGRAM ZA INVALIDE 2014–2021*. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MDDSZ/Invalidi/API-2014-2021/API_2014_2021.pdf

2.4.1 Results of online survey

The online survey in Slovenia was primarily disseminated across identified potential stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project. Primarily, institutions from private and public sector have been included: centres for social work, employment offices, rehabilitation institutions, employment centres and other organisations, that in one way or another work with or include PWD. Most answers received, came from specialized service sector i.e. employment rehabilitation, sector of social care, educational sphere, and sector of social economy.



The work of Individual professionals, providing answers, were in majority (75%) directly connected to PWD's, while others described their work as only indirectly connected to PWD's.

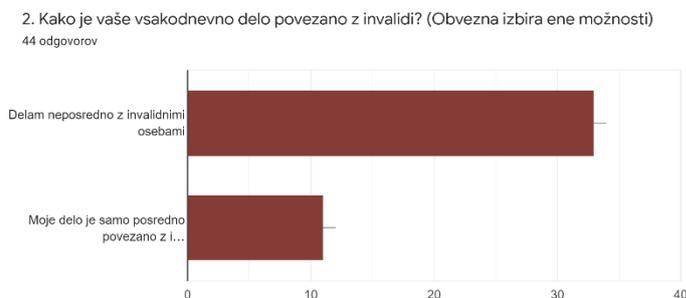


Table: 1d

The type of organisations included in the survey (where answers to the latter have been provided from the participants) are covering social care and welfare, disability companies, freelance entrepreneur, day care working centre, employment centres, social business entities and NGO's active in the field of mental health care.

All organisations (with one exception) have their legal seat in Slovenia.

In the next question we have researched on opinion, measuring/scaling responses to different statements. It was evident from the first phase of country data gathering, that some issues or emerging topics are common to all the countries and needed to be evaluated from the professionals. Unfortunately, the element of discrimination of PWD/PMHP in the general environment/society, is still a "noticed condition" from the side of professionals as the results tend to almost full agreement with this statement in over 70% of respondents (level 4 and 5).

a) Čeprav različne nacionalne zakonodajne ureditve, politike zaposlovanja in strategije obravnavajo enake možnosti za polno udeležbo na trgu dela, je v resnici še vedno mogoče opaziti diskriminatorne prakse na področju vključevanja invalidnih oseb/oseb s težavami v duševnem zdravju na prosti trg dela.

44 odgovorov

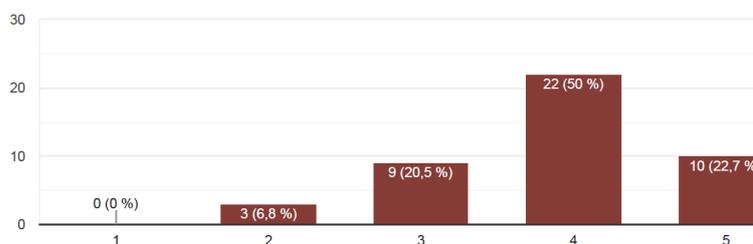


Table: 2d



The question of stigma because of MHP, present on the employer's side is also evident, although slightly higher in comparison to discriminatory elements or threats on labour market supply side in general (previous table)

b) Stigmatizacija oseb s težavami v duševnem zdravju je še vedno prisotna na strani delodajalcev.

44 odgovorov

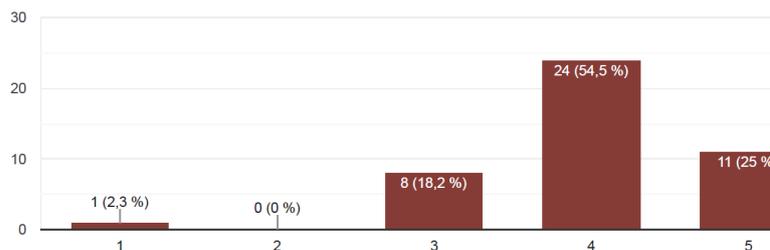


Table: 3d

On the other hand, the stigma in educational sector is evidently lower, although almost 20% of respondents stayed at the decision of neither agreeing nor disagreeing (level 3) with this statement.

c) Stigmatizacija oseb s težavami v duševnem zdravju je še vedno prisotna na strani različnih izobraževalnih institucij.

44 odgovorov

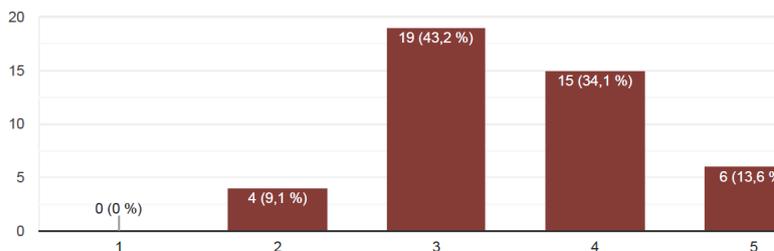


Table: 4d

Another interesting feature were the results about the national quota system as a supportive and promotive element, supporting the inclusion in the labour market. The results are dispersed within different levels whereby we cannot speak of tendency towards full agreement (still over 27% of respondents were undecided on this matter).



d) Obstoječi nacionalni sistem kvot za zaposlovanje invalidnih oseb/oseb s težavami v duševnem zdravju ne spodbuja vključenosti na trg dela v zadostni meri.

44 odgovorov

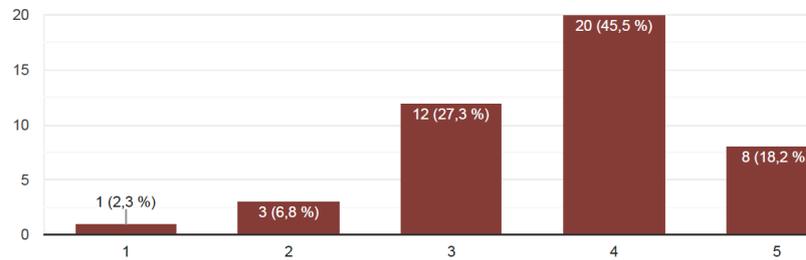


Table: 5d

Within the research about dispersion of existing services and support measures for training and retraining, available to PWD/ PMHP from the side of different organisations again the results have a tendency to full agreement with statement (over 60% for level 4 and 5); however over 30% of respondents were undecided.

e) Razpoložljive storitve in podporni ukrepi, ki so na voljo invalidnim osebam/osebam s težavami v duševnem zdravju na področju usposabljanja/prekvalifikacij so precej razpršeni med različnimi javnimi institucijami in drugimi organizacijami.

44 odgovorov

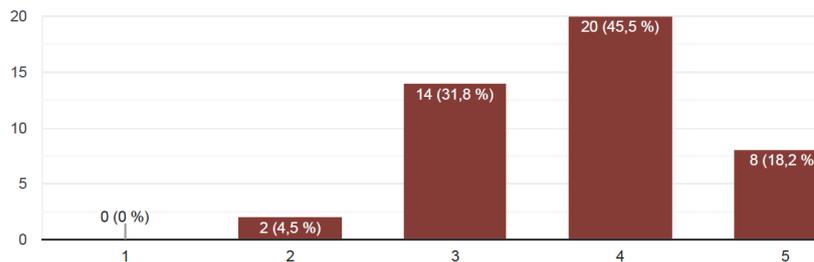


Table: 6d

Responses within the question of more adapted training and/or retraining options to increase potential of performing a freely chosen profession have the tendency to full agreement (over 80% for level 4 and 5).

f) Na sistemski ravni primanjkuje konkretnih in individualno prilagojenih možnosti za usposabljanje in / ali prekvalifikacijo, ki bi invalidnim osebam / osebam s težavami v duševnem zdravju povečale možnost opravljanja svobodno izbranega dela/poklica na odprtem trgu dela.

44 odgovorov

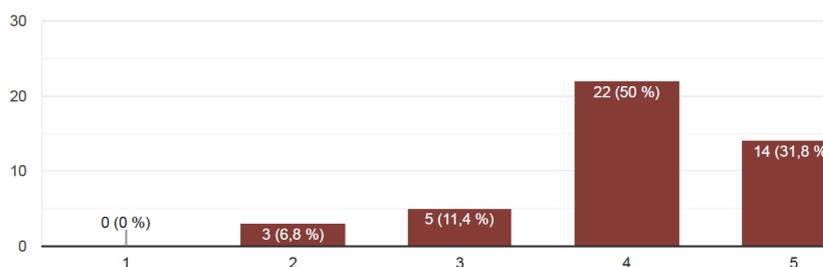


Table: 7d



When it comes down to the need of more contemporary and person-centred approach for the target group in different organisations, the responds are also showing tendency to full agreement with over 70% (for level 4 and 5).

g) V organizacijah, ki v svoje delo vključujejo in/ali zaposlujejo invalidne osebe/osebe s težavami v duševnem zdravju, bi potrebovali bolj sodoben, celosten in na osebo osredotočen pristop (vključno z elementi opolnomočenja in inovativnimi usposabljanji).

44 odgovorov

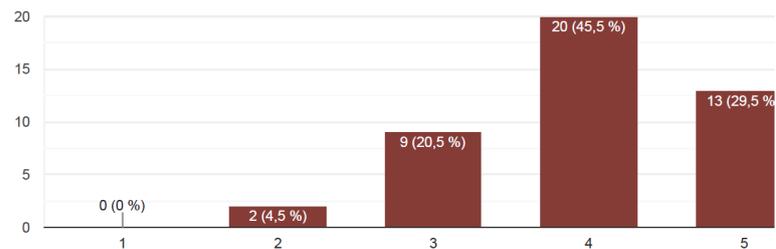


Table: 8d

When evaluating the existing national opportunities for training and education programmes and the level of contemporary and person-centred approach with more work practice nature, the results are more encouraging as the level of agreement no matter the tendency is quite dispersed and only a bit more than half of respondents could agree with this statement.

h) Obstoječe nacionalne ponudbe programov za usposabljanje / usposabljanje za delo / izobraževalni programi ne vključujejo v zadostni meri elementov kot so na osebo osredotočen pristop/povezanost s praktičnimi vidiki dela, ki bi ustrezali invalidnim osebam/osebam s težavami v duševnem zdravju.

44 odgovorov

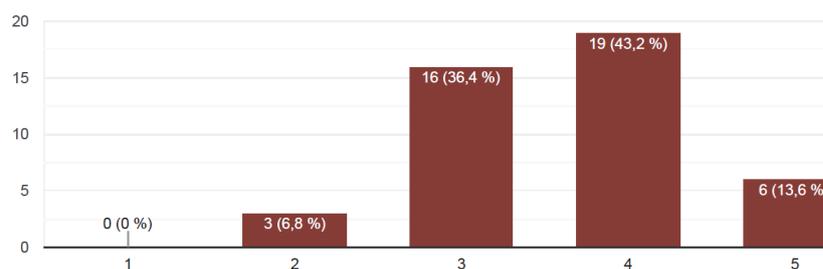


Table: 9d

On the other hand, the general agreement of more person-centred planning in all activities supporting full participation on the labour market is very strong, with over 90% of respondents leaning towards full agreement (level 4 and 5).



i) Bolj individualizirano in na osebo osredotočeno načrtovanje bi moralo biti vključeno v vse dejavnosti, ki podpirajo polno udeležbo invalidov/oseb s težavami v duševnem zdravju na trg dela.

44 odgovorov

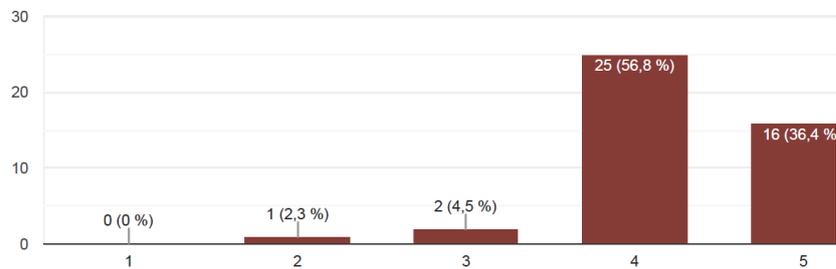


Table: 10d

Last important feature of the survey was the response / self-evaluation of personal knowledge level about innovative elements of training/good practice examples for bottom up approach of labour market inclusion. Over 30% of respondents were undecided and only 7 respondents could express showcasing the understanding of new and bottom up approaches.

j) Seznanjen sem z inovativnimi pristopi usposabljanja in primeri dobrih praks v svoji državi, predvsem s tistimi, ki spodbujajo pristop od spodaj navzgor na področju vključenosti v zaposlovanje invalidov.

44 odgovorov

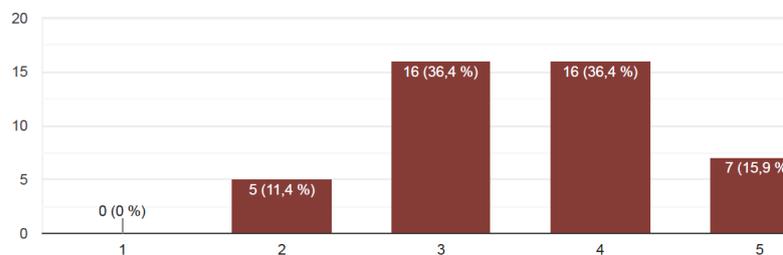


Table: 11d

The results were quite interesting when comparing them to information and facts gathered in the national report in the previous chapter. Practical aspects of labour market inclusion for PWD's in general and from their own perspective confirm that there is a grey and problematic area showcasing stigma, still existing nowadays. The results also confirm the fact that the educational sector is becoming more and more inclusive, but problems arise later, when a person needs all the support for inclusion in concrete work placement. As it was evident from the responds, the services or concrete activities for labour market inclusion could be more individualized. The latter is connected to different elements such as knowledge in HR departments, understanding of creating new tailor-made workplaces and using modern

technology and social media for different purpose (work itself, self-presentation, and communication).

2.4.2 Focus group

The focus group in Slovenia took place in late February 2020. It was planned and organised with a clear thought of seizing the opportunity for an all European composition of expert organisations, working directly or indirectly with PWD within different sectors. The following organisations with 19 participants from eight European countries participated in the focus group:

- Bulgarian Development Agency (Bulgaria)
- INTAMT - International Academy of Management and Technology (Germany)
- Centro Internazionale Per La Dell'educazione E Lo Sviluppo Associazione (CEIPES, Italy)
- 36,6 Competence Centre (Poland) and 36,6 Competence Centre (United Kingdom)
- Asociatia Central European pentru Integrare Socioprofesionala (ACTA, Romania)
- OZARA ZC d.o.o. (Slovenia) - Employment Center
- Izmir Governorship – EU and Foreign Relations Bureau (Turkey) -
- Engelsiz Toplum Olusturma Dernegi (ETOD, Turkey)

All organisation (private and public sector, NGOs) are working in the field of inclusion policies and approaches, training and VET development for adults, regional development, up-skilling, and inclusion of most vulnerable societal groups.

With respect to research questions, used within the interviews, the focus group had a discussion, reflecting the below mentioned objectives:

- Current and common open questions and obstacles when it comes down to inclusion in the so called first or open labour market for PWD (regardless the national regulations in the field).
- Revision of most innovative and inclusive models in different sectors where PWD perform their job.
- Necessity of trainings and special knowledge for both PWD, HR departments and other professionals for deepening the societal inclusion, empowerment and overcoming prejudice.

Experience of all participants showcased that in majority of the country's similarities appear when it comes down to implementation of either strategic documents and regulations on the



full participant of PWD in employment and education. The legislation itself of course follows international standards, conventions, and other strategic documents, however when asking the question on how things function in practice, many obstacles remain. One of the most important ones is the unfortunately still present prejudice and stereotyping about what a person is “capable to do/perform” despite the disability. Although commonly highly regulated areas of employment and education for PWD, the legislative dimension cannot regulate everything as it solemnly does not combat prejudice as such. It might be said, that with all due respect to regulations and norms to be followed, a societal change and shift in perspective taking (on the side of employment market and HR departments and specialists) is more than necessary.

Why the latter is so important - everyone, no matter the nature of disability, is different. Effective and strategically placed guidelines to be followed by HR departments should include also more awareness raising within organisations. Thinking out of the box, researching, acquiring new experience, and seizing the potential of organizing either venues or elements of job performance in an innovative and adapted ways, should be included as an element of HR work.

Showcases of best practice examples, that participants of the focus groups know about or are practicing it, are clearly showing two major potentials:

- Even in some supportive employment models there is still room for innovation, tasks (re)organisation, and other elements that derive from a more personal approach towards an employed PWD (encouraging self-initiative, creativeness, and personal potential).
- HR departments are a potential for addressing the question of obstacles; they know procedures, have the knowledge and can function as a catalyst for change and are also target audience for awareness raising campaigns as they bring new insights into existing and predictable/defined work operations.

One of the clearest evidences for the above mentioned is a notable growth of specialized organisation, offering support service between both entities, that optimistically could already be part of HR departments.

On the other hand, when it comes down to career development, before entering the world of work and afterwards, available trainings should be more person centred, empowering them also in terms of benefits and potentials in using ICT, social media and other means of communication. All the available tools are essential and offer yet another potential for work, communication, connection, and self-presentation. Self- acceptance, empowerment and development of creativity is also another important issue. When discussing about PMHP, this



is even more important since the stereotypes and prejudices showcase even more rootedness in the society. Performing simple tasks, adopted tasks with support is not to be hidden from the public, good examples should be promoted – otherwise we, as society will remain unchanged and unaware of the potential each person can bring no matter the sector working in.

2.4.3 Interviews

In Slovenia, the interviews have been conducted between late February and April, among 10 different professionals. All of them work in social sector, more specifically their scope of work includes employment and rehabilitation activities and services to PWD, social inclusion services of PWD, Special and Rehabilitation pedagogy, Occupational therapy, Individual independent psychological counselling, Human resource management. Professionals work in:

- Disability companies
- Employment centres (i.e. OZARA ZC d.o.o., Zaposlitveni center AVANTUS d.o.o)
- Primary schools
- Independent counselling institutes (i.e. Inštitut Ribalon)
- Private Institutions running social inclusion programmes

All work with PWD and or PMHP, people in need of psychological support, persons with learning deficiency.

The approaches used by the professionals differ and include different aspects of work, that can be described as combination of:

- social work approaches (working with community and individuals, supporting empowerment, inclusion, network building, etc.)
- human resource management
- psychosocial and psychological counselling and support to PWD/PMHP/Persons in distress in general (individual and in group)
- special education pedagogy

No matter the scope of work, all the professionals use individualized approach in one way or another within the scope of their work. Concrete decisions on approach used are, to say the least, always adapted to specific needs of an individual.



When asked about current national situation about inclusion in the open labour market, we received almost a unified answer. All experts do claim and agree that national systemic approach (covering and excluding all means of discrimination on the labour market) is good in comparison to other countries. However, different obstacles seem to remain also in the field of employment inclusion. These obstacles, when reflecting also the results from online survey, seem to have permanent status and are hard to overcome – they can be classified in many cases as simple bureaucratic obstacles (official procedures and demands for employment, adaptation of workplace and most important, the lack of understanding and discrimination against PWD in terms of work efficiency). These obstacles put some individuals into a spiral situation, with almost no chances for employment. One of the interviewees works internationally, specialized in Solution focused Brief therapy, revealed one interesting fact, specific for UK – the obligation of fulfilling an anonymous questionnaire, demanded by the Equality Act, within which the potential employer is checked for discriminatory elements in the employment process (anonymous). When comparing this to responses from Slovenia, this is a step further, most likely hard to achieve as the current employment situation and market in general is quite rigid even for regular job seekers. Also, the institute of adapting the workstation/workplace to a PWD needs, is an institute, used too little in comparison to all options that are offered and supported by the state.

The main challenges, looking national wise, are connected to element of labour market specifics in general (lack of specialized workers in general, mismatch of demand and supply, etc.) and employment sector not having “the ear for inclusion”. On the other hand, there is also noticeable, that inclusion of PWD in the labour market would require something more, aside from general regulations, even though the latter has a high standard when it comes down to overcoming discrimination.

Within the scope of professional work with PWD, different approaches were mentioned from interviewees. The dedication for using innovative approaches remains high in all responses received. The latter means that all interviewees are highly dedicated to search for newest and person-oriented approaches, meaning all are constantly informing themselves about the development of their own profession. Some users of services are offered different opportunities for non-formal learning, performed in different settings to foster and promote cooperation and mutual understanding between PWD and other staff or mentors. One of key elements, when employing a PWD was also described as fostering such development of working environment that includes psychological, emotional, and not only physically aspects of work.

One of the most interesting insights into work with PWD and persons with learning difficulties, that we received, was from the national project, currently performed by a national



network of different organisations active in the field of employment rehabilitation. The project “Prehod mladih”¹ (direct translation would be “Transition of Youth”) is dedicated to boost the social inclusion of young people with special needs, to develop a supportive environment that operates as a connecting link between schools (primary, secondary) and labour market thus to motivate the employers for employing young persons with special needs (children, already with officially offered guidance and support for inclusion in special educational programmes, children with special needs including children with intellectual disabilities, children with eyesight deficiencies, deaf and hearing impaired children, children with physical disparities, children with autistic disorders, children with children with emotional and behavioural disorders). Within the scope of the project, the primary school children are offered support in vocational guidance, choosing a future profession – here a strong impetus lies on person centered approach and finding common solutions when exploring personal wishes and real-life possibilities. The interviewee stated that most valuable data here is received through personal interview, working one on one (which is required also because of the specifics of the project). Network of family members, different presentations and workshops, different professionals included in this process are essential within this project, to search for best possible and personally adapted decision process – the main aim remains in early interventions, that diminishes the future discrepancies in the world of work and performing a vocation. Each individual has a chance to cocreate a special plan for future actions. The “modus operandi” of this project, with the possibilities offered to young people, has not been performed in the past and is therefore highly innovative (a holistic approach offering social network building and support; early career guidance – previously almost non existing for such early age, connecting employers and employees – working together for adapting workplaces, helping also employees to understand each individual within inclusion in employment, fighting discrimination, schooling system and employment sector have never been connected in such an extensive level in the past for this target group). National wise, the target group of beneficiaries includes young people of up to 29 years old (starting usually with pupils, included in the last 2 years of primary school - 8th and 9th grade).

¹ More about the project available here: <https://prehodmladih.si/koordinator-projekt-a/>



2.5 SPAIN

Legislative background/national regulations dealing with the topic of PMD/PWD

The legal framework regulating the inclusion of PWD in Spain is The General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion. This law recasts, clarifies and harmonizes in a single text, the main laws on disability:

- Law 13/1982 of 7 April on the social integration of persons with disabilities (LISMI).
- Law 51/2003 of 2 December on equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility for persons with disabilities (LIONDAU).
- Law 49/2007 of 26 December on infringements and sanctions in the area of equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The norm includes a series of definitions, including those of direct, indirect, association and harassment discrimination, and reinforces the special consideration of multiple discrimination, and is governed by the principles of respect for dignity, independent living, equal opportunities, non-discrimination, universal accessibility, and design for all people, civil dialogue and mainstreaming of policies.

Besides, in accordance with the Law, there is the “Spanish Strategy on Disability” (2012-2020). This Strategy focuses on the removal of barriers and identifies eight key areas for action: accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health, and external action. It includes policies aimed at increasing the number of people with disabilities who are employed, increasing the level of training of job seekers by reducing the school drop-out rate and reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or exclusion.

Issues addressed by the Law

- Rights of people with disability:

This law recognizes persons with disabilities as holders of a series of rights and public authorities as the guarantors of the real and effective exercise of those rights, in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It also establishes a system of infractions and sanctions that guarantee the basic conditions for equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility for persons with disabilities. It is expressly recognised that the exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities is carried out in accordance with the principle of freedom in decision-making, and girls, boys and women with some type of disability are particularly protected. It includes a title



dedicated to the rights of persons with disabilities, which will take their protection to all areas, from health protection, to comprehensive care, including education and employment, social protection, to independent living and participation in public affairs.

- Accessibility:

The areas in which this Law is applied are telecommunications and the information society, urbanized public spaces, infrastructure and building, transport, goods and services available to the public and relations with public administrations, administration of justice, cultural heritage and employment. Each of these areas is addressed in the obligation that all environments, products and services must be open, accessible and practicable for all people gradually and progressively. To this end, it sets deadlines and timetables for the necessary adaptations.

- Employment:

It regulates the obligation of companies with 50 or more workers to reserve 2% of their workforce for people with disabilities. When compliance with the law is not possible, the law establishes an exceptional and transitory period in which the company can take advantage of "alternative measures" of integration, until it can achieve the direct hiring of people with disabilities.

There are exceptional circumstances in the following cases:

- When it is impossible for disabled workers to cover the job offer.
- When they are accredited, questions that motivate the special difficulty to incorporate workers with disabilities to the staff of the company.

The alternative measures of an exceptional nature to the fulfilment of this obligation may be:

1. Contracts for the provision of services or the purchase of goods with Special Employment Centres or with a self-employed (free-lance) worker with a disability.
2. Monetary donations or sponsorship actions in favour of public utility foundations or associations whose corporate purpose is, among others, professional training, labour insertion or the creation of employment in favour of people with disabilities.
3. Constitution of Labour Enclaves² with Special Employment Centres.

² Labour Enclave is understood as the contract between a company in the ordinary labour market, called a collaborating company, and a Special Employment Centre (CEE) for the performance of works or services that are directly related to the main activity of that company and for the performance of which a group of disabled



- Education:

With respect to the right to education, an inclusive education system is ensured, paying attention to the diversity of educational needs of students with disabilities, through the regulation of the corresponding supports and adjustments.

Retraining/employment retraining possibilities

There is a strategy for retraining/employment retraining for disadvantaged people, including PMD/PWD, they are the so called the Personalized Insertion Itinerary. The Personalized Insertion Itinerary is defined as the design, implementation and monitoring of a concatenated sequence of actions, aimed at improving the employability of people seeking employment. The Public Administrations competent on employment grant NGOs carrying on initiatives with this strategy.

Inclusion in the labour market of PMD/PWD

The most noteworthy thing about the group of people with disabilities is their low participation in the labour market. In 2017, its activity rate was 35.0%, which was more than 42 points lower than that of the non-disabled population (INE, 2017).

The employment rate was 25.9%, more than 38 points lower than that of persons without disabilities. (INE, 2017).

On the other hand, the unemployment rate was more than nine points higher than that of the population without a disability, 26.2% as against 17.1% (INE, 2017).

The employment rate of persons with disabilities is 25,9%. 89.1% of them employed are employees and of these, and 74.4% had a permanent contract. The percentage of employees with disabilities in companies with 50 or more employees (those obligated by Law) in the private sector was 2.3%. This figure includes entities specialising in the social inclusion of people with disabilities. (SEPE, n.d)

workers from the Special Employment Centre moves temporarily to the work centre of the collaborating company. It is a commercial relationship formula between an ordinary company and the CEE.

It is an instrument for the creation of employment for people with disabilities and their possible incorporation into the open market. It promotes the development of a productive activity by a professional team of a CEE in the facilities of another company.



As is the case for the general population, women with disabilities were less likely than men to be active presence in the labour market. However, its activity rate was closer to in the non-disabled population (35.0% as opposed to 35.1%). (SEPE, n.d)

The employment rate of men with disabilities was 0.4 points higher than that of women. For the rest of the population aged 16 to 64, the difference was 12.6 points (SEPE, n.d). In turn, the unemployment rate of disabled women was higher than that of men by 0.9 points.

In 2017, a higher incidence of unemployment was observed among the younger population. The largest activity rates were given in the group of 25 to 44 years old, both for persons with disabilities and for the rest of the population (SEPE, n.d).

Work participation is very much determined by the type and intensity of disability. The activity rate for the lowest degree of disability was 57.7% in 2017 and progressively decreased to 11.4% for the highest degree of disability. . (SEPE, n.d)

Hearing impaired people had the highest activity rates (58.1%) and people with mental health challenges had the lowest (31.1%). Only the 16% of the people with mental health illness has a job (CONFEDERACIÓN SALUD MENTAL, n.d).

Work conditions and sectors

The majority of workers with disabilities in 2017 were employees; they had indefinite contract, full time and carried out their activity in the Services sector (SEPE, n.d).

Thus, 89.1% of disabled persons who work do so as employees (5.4 points more than non-disabled people). And 74.4% have a permanent contract (1.1points more than the non-disabled population) (SEPE, n.d).

Data show that 81.8% of employed persons with disabilities work full time, a lower proportion than workers without disabilities (3.5 points less). In addition to that 82.7% of employed persons with disabilities carries out their activity in the Services sector, compared to 75.4% of those without disabilities (SEPE, n.d).

Working benefits for hiring PWD

Among the policies aimed at promoting the working activity of the collective are those that promote their insertion into ordinary employment. These include reductions and bonuses on taxes, both for employees and for those self-employed.



There is also a specific hiring modality for workers with a disability, which, in addition to entailing discounts on Social Security contributions, provides for certain subsidies or grants to the company.

Reductions and bonuses in taxes and the specific hiring benefited primarily the male population, the 16-44 age group, to those disability groups associated with sensory and intellectual impairment and people with intellectual disabilities with a degree of disability greater than 65% (Empleo con apoyo, n.d.).

Main obstacles for labour market inclusion in practice

We found several factors that hinder the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market. From the point of view of companies, and according to the report of Directors and Corporate Responsibility, drawn up by the Adecco Foundation (Fundación Adecco, n.d), 70% of companies encounter obstacles in hiring people with disabilities. Their great ignorance in the work with this profile of worker united the image of people with disabilities even socially stigmatized makes their inclusion more difficult.

From the point of view of people with disabilities, one factor that can contribute to maintaining this high rate of unemployment is their low qualification. One third of persons with disabilities aged 25-44 did not complete primary education and only 18% attain a higher level of education. Only 1.3% of university students have some degree of disability. (ODISNET, 2019).

It is also true that there is a great percentage of PWD that do not want to work: 63% of people with disabilities do not have a job and do not look for one. This low activity is attributed to multiple simultaneous factors: the lack of educational programmes that guarantee equal training, the lack of specific resources for job search, a pension system that promotes inactivity, the barriers in the person inherited from social and cultural clichés, and business barriers when hiring them because of stereotypes (ODISNET,2019).

Existing private/non formal/adult education initiatives/good practice or project examples

Good practices on training detected, were:

- Certificates of professionalism: The certificates of professionalism are an instrument that accredits the qualification for the development of a labour activity with significance for the employment and assures the necessary formation for its acquisition.
- Personalized Insertion Itineraries.



Good practices on job inclusion detected, were:

- Inserta programme- Fundacion ONCE: The Inserta Programme is a DUAL training programme, which combines theoretical and practical training in order to achieve the professional development adapted to a first business experience and improve the employability (Fundación ONCE, n.d.).
- Supported employment: Supported Employment consists of a set of services and actions focused on the person, mainly individualized, so that the person with disabilities and with special difficulties can access, maintain and promote themselves in an ordinary enterprise in the open labour market, with the support of professionals and other types of support (Fundación ONCE, n.d.).
- POISES programmes – European Social Fund: It aims to improve employability and promote access to employment for those individuals and social groups most affected by unemployment (Fundación ONCE, n.d.).
- Program “Incorpora” – Led by “La Caixa” (a bank) which grants NGOs to develop the program that has 3 modalities: self-employment, re-employment for ex-prisoners and employment for people with mental health issues. The program also offers trainings for the NGOs to carry on the initiative (Fundación La Caixa, n.d.).
- “Talent opportunity” – Fundación ONCE: Scholarships for PWD for transnational mobility; for master and postgraduates; doctoral scholarships; research scholarships; and scholarships for studies and sport (Fundación ONCE, n.d.).

Resources:

1 INE (National Statistician Institute) (2017). The employment of people with disabilities.

Retrieved from: www.ine.es

2 Empleo con apoyo (n.n). Retrieved from:

<http://www.empleoconapoyo.org/aese/article15.html>

3 SEPE (n.d). Employment for people with disabilities. Retrieved from:

<https://www.sepe.es/HomeSepe/Personas/encontrar-trabajo/empleo-para-personas-con-discapacidad>

4 FAAM (n.d). *Good Practices. Global strategies for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market.* Retrieved from: <https://www.faam.es/index.php/publicaciones-faam/item/guia-de-buenas-practicas-estrategias-globales-para-la-inclusion-laboral-de-las-personas-con-discapacidad>

5 Confederación Salud Mental (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://consaludmental.org/>

5 Confederación Salud Mental (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://consaludmental.org/>



6 Fundación ADECCO (n.d). *Directors and Corporate Responsibility*. Retrieved from:

<https://fundacionadecco.org/>

7 Fundación ONCE (n.d). *Legal advances*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.fundaciononce.es/es/pagina/impulso-normativo>

8 Fundación ONCE (n.d) *11 Good practice of inclusion of people with disabilities*.

<https://www.odismet.es/biblioteca-virtual/11-buenas-practicas-de-inclusion-laboral-de-personas-con-discapacidad>

9 Obra Social La Caixa (n.d). *Programa Incorpora*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.incorpora.org/metodo-incorpora>

10 ODISNET (2019). La situación de las personas con discapacidad en el mercado laboral:

informe 4. Retrieved from: <https://www.consaludmental.org/publicaciones/Informe-odismet-2019.pdf>



2.5.1 Results of online survey

The online survey was sent stakeholders active in the field of disabilities. A total of 90 questionnaires were answered by different types of professional. The 82% of the respondents work directly with people with disabilities

The 84, 5% agrees (46,7%) or totally agrees (37,8%) that although different national legislative regulation, employment policies and strategies address equal opportunities for full participation in the labour market, in reality discriminatory elements can still be noticed when it comes down to employing a PWD/PMD in the open labour market (question 5.a)

5. Para las siguientes declaraciones, por favor, elija una de las opciones que correspondan a su nivel de acuerdo (1 - totalmente en desacuerdo, 5 - totalmente de acuerdo):

a. Aunque las diferentes leyes nacionales, las políticas y estrategias de empleo abordan la igualdad de oportunidades para la plena participación en el mercado laboral, en la práctica aún se detectan elementos discriminatorios cuando se trata de emplear a personas con discapacidad en el mercado laboral abierto.

90 odgovorov

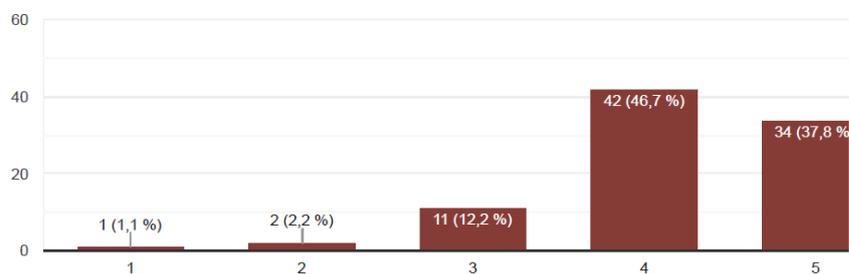


Table: 1e

Also, there is big majority (84%) that considers that people with mental health issues are stigmatized in companies (question 5.b) and that this stigmatization is also present in educative institutions (86, 6%). (Question 5.c)

b. Las personas con trastornos mentales están estigmatizadas en las empresas.

90 odgovorov

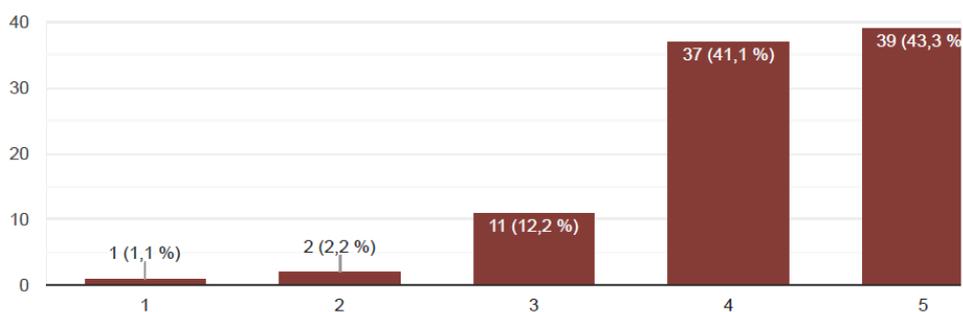


Table: 2e



c. La estigmatización de las personas con trastornos mentales todavía está presente en diferentes instituciones educativas.

90 odgovorov

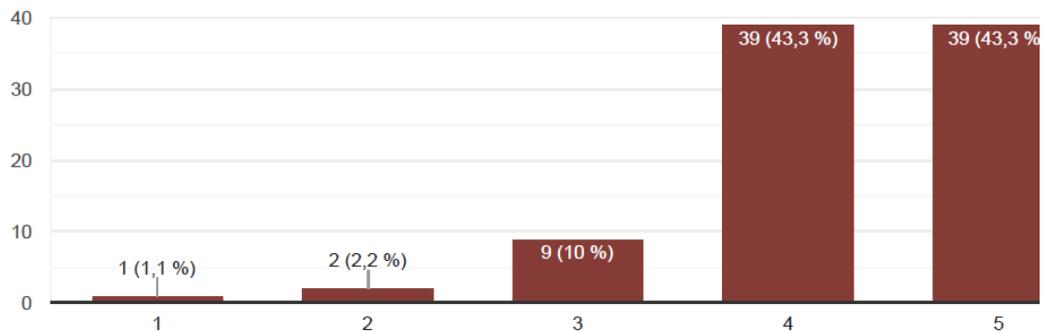


Table: 3e

Regarding the national quota system, the 60% of the survey respondents consider that it does not fully promote the labour inclusion of PWD (42 % agrees and 17,8% totally agrees), nevertheless there is a 32,3% who remains in the middle value.

d. El sistema de cuotas nacional existente para el empleo de personas con discapacidad no promueve plenamente la inclusión en el mercado laboral

90 odgovorov

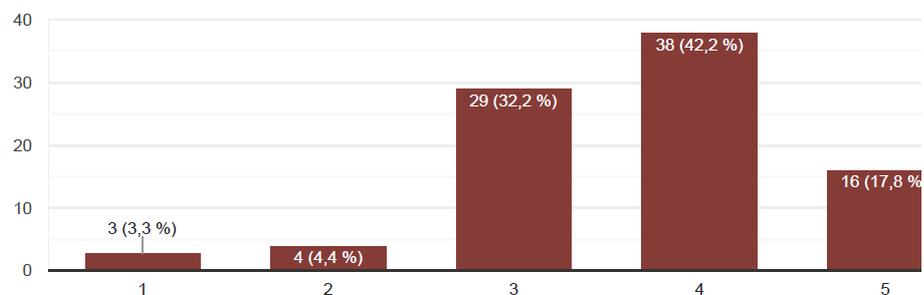


Table: 4e

Over the 70% (50% agrees and 22% totally agrees) thinks that available services and support measures offered to PWD/PMD for job training and retraining are still quite dispersed between different authorities and organisations (Q.5e).



e. Los servicios disponibles y las medidas de apoyo ofrecidas a personas con discapacidad para su capacitación laboral y readaptación profesional todavía están bastante dispersas entre las diferentes autoridades y organizaciones.

90 odgovorov

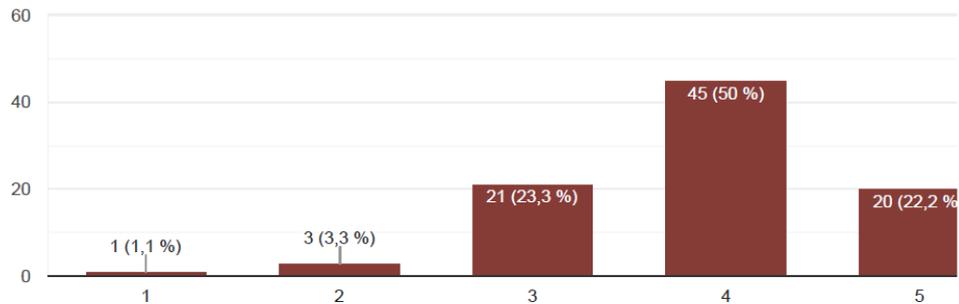


Table: 5e

Also, the most part considers that available services and support measures offered to PWD/PMD for job training and retraining are still quite dispersed between different authorities and organizations (Q5f), 43, 3% agrees and 25,6% totally agrees. A quarter of the polled ones does not agree nor disagree.

f. Existe una falta de oportunidades de capacitación y reciclaje concretas y adaptadas para las personas con discapacidad que aumenten sus posibilidades de insertarse en el mercado laboral abierto.

90 odgovorov

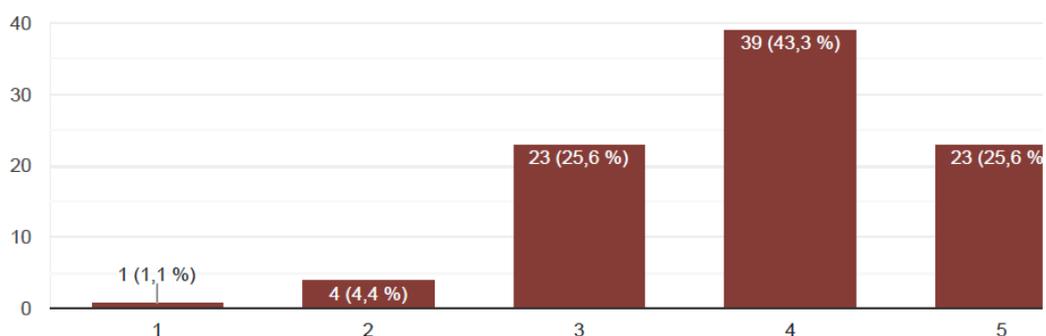


Table: 6e

There is also a big consensus regarding the Q5g: “A more person centered, contemporary, and holistic approach (including empowerment elements and innovative trainings) is needed in the organisations which include PWD/PMD in their activities/or employ them.” The 50% of the survey respondents totally agrees with this sentence and the 34,4% agrees.



g. Se necesita un enfoque más centrado en la persona, contemporáneo y holístico que incluya elementos de empoderamiento y capacitaciones innovadoras, en las organizaciones que trabajan con personas con discapacidad.

90 odgovorov

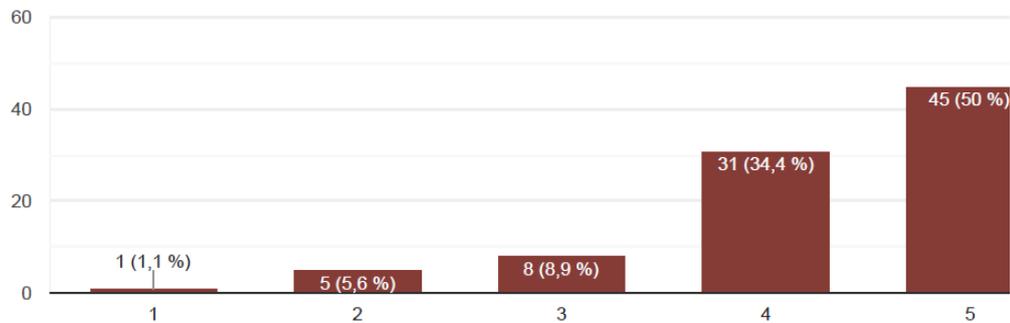


Table: 7e

With the question Q5.h “Existing national offers of training/job training/educational programmes do not address the person centered and innovative/practice-oriented elements to the extent needed also for PWD/PMD” there is more than quarter of the polled ones who gave an intermediate answer (26,7%), and the majority agrees with that sentence (43,3%) and another quarter totally agrees (25,6%).

h. Las ofertas nacionales existentes de capacitación y los programas educativos no abordan elementos centrados en la persona e innovadores necesarios para responder a las necesidades e intereses de las personas con discapacidad.

90 odgovorov

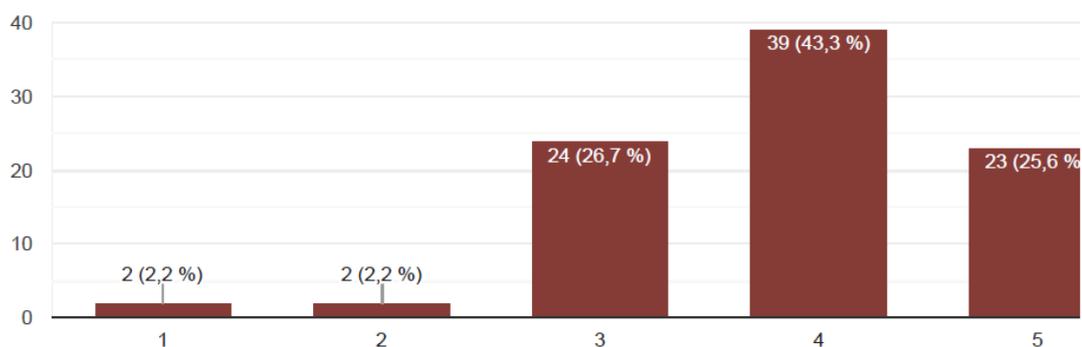


Table: 8e



More than the half of the respondents (52,2%) totally agrees that a more individualized and person centered planning should be included in all activities that support full participation of the PWD/PMD in the labour market (Q5.i) and the 36, 7% agrees on that.

i. Se debe incluir una planificación más individualizada y centrada en la persona en todas las actividades que apoyen la plena participación de las personas con discapacidad en el mercado laboral.

90 odgovorov

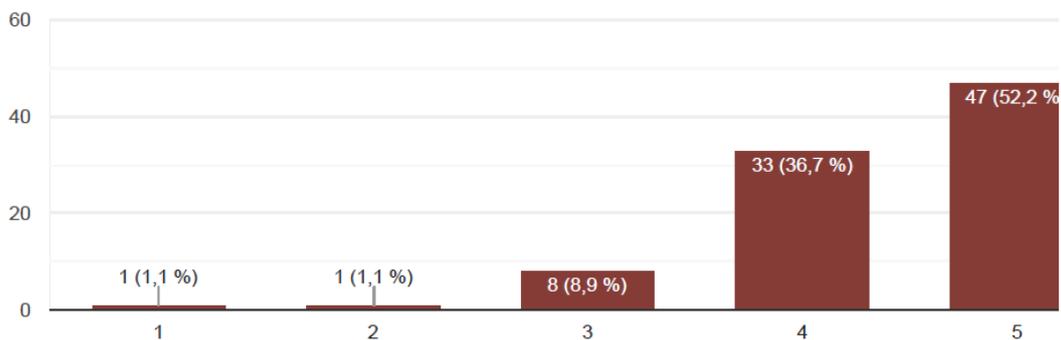


Table: 9e

The 61 % of the polled is aware of innovative training approaches and good practice examples in my country, above all those promoting a bottom-up approach in the field of PWD employment inclusion, and the 30% is not so sure.

j. Conozco enfoques innovadores de capacitación y ejemplos de buenas prácticas en mi país, sobre todo aquellos que promueven un enfoque de abajo hacia arriba en el campo de la inclusión laboral de las personas con discapacidad.

90 odgovorov

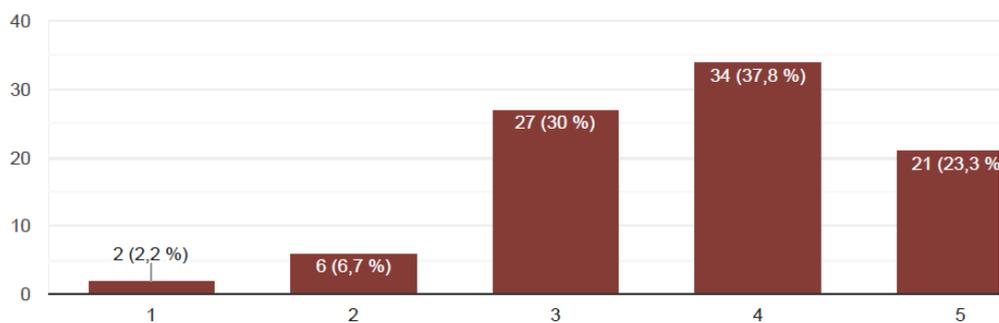


Table: 10e

2.5.2 Focus groups

Focus group in Spain was organized with professionals in the field of employment and disability and took place at the end of February 2020. Participants came from the following organisations:

- INTRAS FOUNDATION - Responsible of training and employment department.
- INTRAS FOUNDATION - VET trainer
- ARTMO- Shelter employment centre for people with mental health issues
- GRUPO LINCE - Shelter employment centre for people with Down Syndrome
- PLENA INCLUSION – Service provider for people with intellectual disability
- COCEMFE - Service provider for people with motor disabilities
- ISEM – Network of mental health service providers
- Fundación Agustín Serrate - Service provider for people with mental health disorders
- Asociación Murciana de Rehabilitación Psicosocial - Service provider for people with mental health disorders and/or addictions.

Participants describe/evaluate the current and national state of inclusion and full participation of PWD/PMD in the labour market as complicated. Almost all of the PWD/PMD having an employment are working in sheltered employment centres, not in ordinary labour market.

They all agree that group facing more difficulties in labour inclusion are the people with mental health problems. There is still a lot to do regarding this area of disability. The lack of knowledge of general society about the mental disease and the diffusion of the stigma are the main obstacles for the full participation of PMD. Mass media disseminate a very negative image of people with mental issues increasing the social stigma and thus, making more difficult the social and labour inclusion of those people.

Today in Spain the model more for promoting labour inclusion of people with disabilities has changed and is more centred on the individual. Participants agree on the advance that this change constitutes.

The group started a discussion about the different aspects needed to be improved in order to reduce the gap of people with disabilities in the area of employment. These are some of the most relevant aspects in which they all agreed:

- Individual: providing the necessary resources for access to a job (training, guidance, support).
- Business: raising awareness and visibility in companies in the ordinary market. As well as making protected employment companies competitive and productive within the market.
- Population: dissemination and visibility.



- Public health network: coordination and joint work with professionals and treatment programmes.

2.5.3 Interviews

Seven different service provider organizations for people with different disabilities have been interviewed, deriving from the following organisations:

- Fundación Intras – Mental health
- Grupo Lince – Intellectual disabilities
- CODEMFE- Physical disabilities
- Plena Inclusión- Intellectual disabilities
- Fundación Agustín Serrate
- ISEM – Network of organisations for the inclusion of people with disabilities
- Asociación Murciana de Rehabilitación Psicosocial– Addictions and mental health rehabilitation center.

All the organisations have the mission of promoting the inclusion of their target groups and work using an integral perspective and with the person-centred model of intervention.

As participants in the Focus Groups, the interviewees consider that there are very few opportunities in the ordinary labour market for people with disabilities. In Spain, most of the people with disabilities are working in sheltered employment centres. For the people with mental disorders or intellectual disabilities the situation is even worse, because the most part of the sheltered employment centres in Spain are mainly focused in physical disabilities.

There is still a lot to do regarding the inclusion of people with mental health issues.

Regardless, in the last two decades, a paradigm shift in the resource management model has taken place at the national level and therefore at the regional and organizational level, favouring the deinstitutionalization (e.g., former psychiatrists also colloquially called "asylums") and favouring a transition to an inclusive model, where people with mental health problems have moved into community life, and new employment paths have been opened. But this process is still in transition, there are still elements and training resources that are not inclusive at all, derived from the regulations that do not contemplate an adaptation for people with disabilities, as in the case of dual training , for example.

Against this framework and model of recovery, we find that the unemployment rate of people with some type of serious mental disorder is at the bottom of all disabilities, with an estimated 80%. Companies focus on economic benefits and consider that an employee with disabilities will not be profitable:



Therefore, efforts must include strategies that include employment to intervene, both at individual and community level.

“What I perceive when doing intermediation is that companies (including EWCs) look at their production and profitability, so they want workers who are 100% suitable. They get discounts and advantages offered to them for hiring people with disabilities, but the disability, as many of our users complain, stays at the door, or rather in the papers (contracts, bonuses...) but disabilities are not taken into account in the reality of daily life and work.” (Company intermediary – COCEMFE)

Interviewees focus on the following issues as main obstacles:

- Current COVID -19 crisis

Some of the interviewees point out that there is a situation prior to the State of Alarm and a worsening of that situation that we cannot really know how far it will go.

The previous situation was not one of full inclusion. There was a labour development of people with disabilities in environments linked to the associative movement of promotion of this group. But for the rest of society and companies, people with disabilities continued to be unknown and there were still great prejudices against people. In the case of people with mental health issues, these prejudices are the base of the social stigma, which continues being the main obstacle to their full inclusion. The current reality is a high number of shelter employment centres are forced now to temporarily fire people, with a clear uncertainty about what will happen when the State of Alert ends and how the market will be restructured. The unemployment rate of people with disabilities may increase even more as a result of the economic crisis in which we are immersed.

- Lack of supporting professionals in the companies:

Another of the greatest challenges is to find a professional team to accompany them, especially when dealing with people with mental health issues, as it requires specific qualifications to be able to meet the specific demands inherent in the group of people with mental health problems. This makes it very difficult for ordinary companies to invest in this, despite the fact that the current Collective Disability Agreement provides salary advantages and, according to Spanish regulations, companies are obliged to have a percentage of people with disabilities, which in many cases is not complied with, and they prefer to pay the corresponding fine, or if the amount is very large, sometimes with that amount they call for aid to help promote the employment of people with disabilities.

- Prejudices and stigma: The other great challenge is associated with the stigma that still persists with respect to the group of people with mental health problems, and to demonstrate that they can indeed perform a job.



- Competitiveness: Employment is becoming more competitive, jobs are becoming more demanding, it is necessary to offer customers quality products and services in terms of business viability. This is difficult if companies do not have the necessary means to guarantee success. Hence, this is on one hand the difficulty encountered by the Special Employment Centres. And on the other hand, ordinary companies focus on productivity and profit, and not on creating inclusive environments.

These are the main innovative approaches of the organisations:

- Transversal methodology to develop skills and to gain experience at the same time.
- Welcoming Process, aimed at facilitating the integration of the worker into the workplace.
- Job Matching Process, aimed at favouring the maintenance of the position.
- Personal and Social Development Process, aimed at personal, social and family aspects that favour their quality of life. Within each Process, workers are empowered through the acquisition of skills.
- Tailored Employment projects, in which the person decides her/his life project and thus she/he becomes more autonomous and gets empowered.
- Innovative methodologies for training skills: storytelling, virtual reality training, learning-service approach, gaming, social networking.
- Coaching and emotional intelligence training.
- Speednetworking.

A tailor-made training for PWD/PMD should include:

- Individual Support Plans should be included with differentiated objectives for each area where the different social and labour agents participate (managers, supervisors, family, the disabled person himself, etc...) to guarantee successful results.
- Questions of an emotional nature (such as overcoming stress in a job interview or in a practical test) and offering a lot of information on how the selective processes are developed, so that people can face these processes with greater security. Also, knowing the place where the test will be carried out or where the work will take place can enormously facilitate the correct labour insertion.
- The inherent characteristics of the group should be considered, for example, that sometimes after a convalescence process people have to be completely retrained in the same skills, and this reality is not usually considered in ordinary companies. Another problem is that the quota of people with disabilities that companies are obliged to hire

does not contemplate % by disability, so that people with mental health problems have less possibilities of being recruited in the ordinary market, because sometimes the person has to be retrained and the recovery process has to begin.

- In ordinary companies there should be a support unit (or personnel adjustment service) by ratios, which already exists, for example, in EWCs and sometimes in insertion companies. This is a key figure that accompanies and supports people with mental illness in their workplaces
- The personalized training for people with mental illness and/or disabilities has to include actions that facilitate the active role of the person in his or her insertion process, who is the main protagonist. Supporting it and providing the necessary resources for effective decision-making. From a working framework based on the motivational interview, it is possible to include sessions of awareness of the labour profile, of the difficulties and strengths, design of adapted measures for the development of the labour activity, access to adapted training and professionalization.
- New and emerging employment fields should be considered and providing training along these lines to train people in new professions.
- Training on emotional intelligence, change management, social skills, acceptance of the circumstances of the environment that do not depend exclusively on the person himself, if how he reformulates it in his head and approach to continue to be effective in the search (relationship with peers, stress management, frustration tolerance ...).
- Accompaniment in the workplaces, that is to say, to assure the presence of someone of trust in whom the person can deposit all his/her psychotic anxieties. This is the basic adaptation that we consider necessary to achieve the objectives of inclusion with the greatest possible guarantees. In addition, the possibility of adapting certain aspects of the work environment such as schedules, breaks, flexibility of recovery.

3. DISCUSSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The present report reveals interesting features and insights for each country. On an aggregate level and cross comparison between the countries, many similarities appear:

- The provided support system for inclusion into primary or first labour market does not entirely solve the problem of inclusion.
- Discrimination is still perceived as an element within employment inclusion in general.
- Encouragement and necessary knowledge for inclusion are important elements of human resource knowledge base and are a catalyst between the PWD and employer.
- Innovative and contemporary approaches in working with PWD are an element of constant change of contemporary findings and speak in favour of developing a targeted training (for PWD empowerment, leading to more self-confidence and finding personal strengths).
- Best practice examples are a showcase of how important it is to find ways to connect the employment market and PWD, finding solutions, that address the needs of one side and personal wishes of people entering the job market – both parties equally included to find common and acceptable solutions.
- Within training opportunities, person-centered approach and person-oriented design of the latter are of great importance.

For each country, concrete recommendations for future actions are presented below.

Belgium

By comparing the data gathered in our country review with the statements in the online survey, the interviews, and the focus group, we can highlight two predominant issues that could be attacked with our project.

First and foremost, we must realize that PWD still have to face discrimination in the primary labour market. This is because the general public, and hence also employers and HR departments, have little awareness about disabilities and their specificities. PWD are therefore still stigmatized. Dedicated awareness-raising coaching for employers and employees could be helpful to tackle prejudice and reduce the fear of the challenge of including PWD in their staff. Also, employers need to be informed more efficiently about all the help they can expect if they want to employ PWD; a more transparent, less complex system would help both them and their potential employees.



Secondly, people with disabilities need more encouragement and assistance when it comes to choosing their own life project; a lot of them have to face their weaknesses so often that they forget about their strengths. They need more person-centred trainings and should also get non-binding opportunities to experiment and try out different occupations. By focussing on their strengths and the things they actually like to do, they are more likely to find an occupation that gives them a sense of purpose and fulfilment.

Success stories should be shared in the media; we need to shed light on positive experiences of PWD in the labour market; this should encourage both employers and PWD to come closer together. While sharing these stories, we need to ensure that access to information is granted for everyone; things have to be written in easy-to-read language and the content needs to be multimodal, to include blind and deaf people as well.

Italy

The unemployment problem of PWD / PMD in Italy, which is around 80%, is still very significant, despite the progress made over the past 20 years. It is also exacerbated today by the dramatic economic crisis and by the decrease in jobs, caused by the emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic. We therefore recommend the common commitment of the social forces and the regional/national decision-making authorities, so that, despite the current situation, PMD / PWD can be increasingly included in the labour market, and supported to express their potential and consciously acquire their own social role.

Actions should be taken in order to fulfil the objective of harmonize the job inclusion policies on the national territory, as well as apply more effectively the Law 68/99. Many stakeholders have recommended the abolishment, or at least the reconsideration, of the obligation to hire PWD/PMD foreseen by that Law.

In particular, on the basis of the findings of the present research in Italy, the following recommendations are made:

- to support of the network of territorial services, and the Third Sector. There is the need to enhance the great heritage represented by the PMD / PWD associations and their families, which possess a high value know-how, and by the world of cooperatives, capable of managing, even the most complex disabilities in the field of work;
- to develop an ever-increasing dialogue between the profit and non-profit world, to convey the experiences and knowledge of companies on the one hand, and of the associations and voluntary world on the other, towards the goal of a model of economic growth more inclusive of diversity;



- to improve tailored strategies and training and coaching courses for PWD / PMD, in line with the ongoing transformation of the demands of the job market;
- to boost the presence of the Disability manager in the companies, who, from his/her privileged position, can best support and enhance the PMD / PWD, consolidating a stronger link between the Company and the reference territory;
- to raise awareness of companies about the issue of "disability and work" through: tailored training on the characteristics, needs and resources of the PMD / PWD; strategies for eliminating the stigma and the prejudice toward persons with mental disability, and enhancing human resources.

Romania

Based on findings and description of the situation in Romania, the following recommendations for the future are proposed:

- Educational system has to provide a multidisciplinary complex evaluation that emphasize the child abilities and orientate the child toward the best form and curricula of education. Thus the child can benefit from getting skills and competencies that will allow him to enter the job market.
- Career orientation services should be timely provided so that the child with disability learn a job that suit not his/her abilities and competencies but also the preferences.
- More services pre and especially after employment should be provided to PWD once they enter the job market so that they can adjust properly to the requirements of the job and the social work environment.
- NGOs should be more supported by the state to provide the services mentioned above as they benefit of highly trained specialists in the area.
- The employment law enforcement with regards to PWD should be done. The enforcement should be supported by more education and financial support for innovative adaptations that need to be done by potential employers.

Slovenia

The situation national wise, as perceived through gathered data, reveals several interesting aspects. The labour market, in comparison to other countries, is on one hand very rigid – on the other hand, all available options for supporting the involvement of PWD in the world of work are not functioning fully. The latter might be connected to the lack of knowledge and general motivation from the side of employers. When expressing it in a simplest way of “this takes too much time, too many things need to be reconsidered, etc.” reveals that supportive services for PWD, connecting both sides are vital. Also, PWD in general benefit from a more



person-centred approach as in some cases, the bureaucratic and complicated procedures present a great risk in diminishing motivation also on the side of PWD. More impetus would be needed also in boosting understanding of how more person-oriented approaches and network community could enable or ease up the process also in including PWD in existing work operations, also a shift in perception taking of what person can or cannot do. The number of unemployed PWD is unfortunately is still relatively high.

From the perspective of societal challenges and latest changes, connected to health/pandemic situation in Europe, the threat of job losses and diminished inclusion, represent an even greater challenge and uncertain perspective for the future. It is this very moment, where self-representation, positive self-image and on the other hand perception taking from employers' side is crucial, to not lose the focus for the future and thus prevent any further deepening of discrimination in general.

Spain

The employment rate for PWD is very low, mainly due to prejudices and lack of knowledge of the companies towards PWD and especially for people with mental disorders.

The situation is worsening due to the COVID 19 crises. In Spain, most of the PWD use to be employed in sheltered employment centres which are now being forced to fire employees due to the quarantine.

The main recommendation is to work on different levels to improve the labour inclusion of PWD:

- Service providers: a person-centred approach has to be established to support the decision making and the autonomy of the users, incorporating new innovative approaches and methodologies.
- Individual: supporting them on finding and defining their own project life, tailoring the training and providing the necessary resources for access to a job (training, guidance, support); and providing them with the necessary emotional training to manage stress, frustration and to empower them by using different innovative methodologies.
- Business: raising awareness and visibility in companies in the ordinary market to eliminate stereotype linked with PWD. As well as making protected employment companies competitive and productive within the market.
- Population: dissemination and visibility of the abilities of PWD to eliminate stereotypes and social stigma, especially for people with mental health issues.
- Public health network: coordination and joint work with professionals and treatment programmes.



APPENDIX 1

ON - LINE QUESTIONNAIRE - sample

We kindly ask you to complete the below evaluation for a study conducted under the Erasmus+ supported project ENABLE – Enhancing Employability Skills of Persons with Disabilities. This short questionnaire is completely anonymous – no private data of any kind will be collected within the answers provided.

Please choose one of the answers below or add specification if none of the options apply to you.

1. In what sector do you currently work in? (*obligatory to choose one option*)

- a) Social care sector
- b) Educational sector
- c) Specialized services sector (rehabilitation/support to persons with disabilities/employment office)
- d) Human resource department
- e) Social economy sector
- f) Other, please specify:

2. How is your daily work connected to persons with disabilities? (*Obligatory to choose one option*)

- a) I work directly with PWD
- b) My work is only indirectly connected to PWD

3. Please, state the name and type of your organisation (*not obligatory*):

4. In what country is the head seat of your organisation? (not obligatory):

- a) Belgium
- b) Italy
- c) Romania
- d) Slovenia
- e) Spain
- f) Other _____

5. For the following statements below, we kindly ask you to provide your answers, by choosing one of the options that correspond to your level of agreement - 1 corresponds to your full disagreement and the criteria 5 corresponds to your full agreement with the statement (1 – fully disagree, 5 - fully agree):



- a) **Although different national legislative regulation, employment policies and strategies address equal opportunities for full participation in the labour market, in reality discriminatory elements can still be noticed when it comes down to employing a PWD/PMD in the open labour market**

1 2 3 4 5

- b) **The stigmatization of people with mental disorders is still present in employers.**

1 2 3 4 5

- c) **The stigmatization of people with mental disorders is still present in different educational institutions.**

1 2 3 4 5

- d) **The existing national quota system for employment of PWD/PMD does not fully promote the inclusion in the labour market.**

1 2 3 4 5

- e) **Available services and support measures offered to PWD/PMD for job training and retraining are still quite dispersed between different authorities and organisations.**

1 2 3 4 5

- f) **There is lack of more concrete and adapted training and/or retraining opportunities offered systemically to PWD/PMD in order to at least increase the chance of performing a freely chosen job in the open labour market.**

1 2 3 4 5

- g) **A more person centered, contemporary, and holistic approach (including empowerment elements and innovative trainings) is needed in the organisations who include PWD/PMD in their activities/or employ them.**

1 2 3 4 5

- h) **Existing national offers of training/job training/educational programmes do not address the person centered and innovative/practice-oriented elements to the extent needed also for PWD/PMD.**



1 2 3 4 5

- i) **A more individualised and person centered planning should be included in all activities that support full participation of the PWD/PMD in the labour market.**

1 2 3 4 5

- j) **I am aware of innovative training approaches and good practice examples in my country, above all those promoting a bottom-up approach in the field of PWD employment inclusion.**

1 2 3 4 5

6. **If you wish to be updated about the progress of the project, we kindly invite you to state your email address here (not obligatory):**

Thank you for your attention



APPENDIX 2

Sample questionnaire for interviews and focus groups

- 1.** Briefly describe the area of your work, groups and/or individuals you work with (users of your services / activities)? What approaches do you use in your professional work and how would you briefly describe them?
- 2.** How would you describe/evaluate the current (national) state of inclusion and full participation of PWD/PMD in the labour market?
- 3.** What are the current challenges and/or obstacles in your country, when it comes down to full participation of PWD/PMD in the labour market in your country? How would you describe them from the perspective of your professional work?
- 4.** Does your work include different contemporary / innovative approaches (i.e. engaging in creative workshops, using on-line social networks, storytelling, empowerment activities)? How would you describe them?
- 5.** What kind of elements, according to your opinion and target groups you work with, should be included into a tailor-made training for PWD/PMD, that would enable them a better and more important, a full participation in the labour market?

