

HOW TO HELP DISABLED GRADUATES TO ENTER THE LABOUR MARKET – CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS FOR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. RESEARCH IN SILESIA REGION IN POLAND

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Abstract: Providing employment for people with disabilities is one of the most important strategic aims of every country. Polish rates of employment of disabled are much lower (14.8%) than in European Countries with the highest rate: Austria – 67.17%, Sweden - 62%. For the diagnosis of problems and determinants of the employment of people with disabilities and work out mechanisms for better inclusion of them in labour market there was established International Cooperation Platform - a network of partners from Poland, Germany and France working for the benefit of the employment of people with disabilities. The first part of article presents results of comparative research on problems on labour market of disabled conducted among employers, people with disabilities and representatives of schools responsible for the education of people with disabilities. The second part of article highlights model of cooperation in International Cooperation Platform, whose members include: employers, people with disabilities, the educational system subjects responsible for the education of people with disabilities, District Labour Offices, legislators, foundations supporting people with disabilities.

Keywords: disabled pupils, education system, vocational advisory system, labor market.

Introduction

Problems of employment of disabled are often undertaken by researchers. Most of them concentrate on situation of disabled people on labour market. Although many institutions and organizations in Poland offer help for disabled people, their activities are not integrated, as it is organised in France for example. Poland has no central institution which offers a complex help for those disabled who can and want to enter the labour market and work. Activities of recruitment offices on regional levels, institutions of educational system responsible for help for disabled, offices of cities' major representatives for disabled, commissions responsible for making decisions of disability, private associations and foundations for disabled are not coherent and consistent. Researches of Nowak [12] confirm that negative social attitude belongs to the main factors of social exclusion of disabled women, especially on labour

market. Nowak also proves the necessity of integration of tasks of institutions and organisations responsible for support of disabled people.

Employers rarely cooperate with educational system to develop vocational education and they are unwilling to undertake joint projects to integrate educational system and labour market requirements [14]. Therefore, it is a big challenge for schools to prepare disabled pupils to enter the labour market and help them to start effectively exists in society.

In the research on situation of disabled people on labour market the following areas can be observed:

- Studies on situation of disabled on labour market [3, 5];
- Analysis of sociological and psychological aspects of employment and unemployment of disabled people [2, 7, 9, 10, 22];
- Analysis of regulations of employment of disabled people [4, 8];
- Research into education of disabled pupils [11];

There are two terms defining pupils with dysfunctions (Tab. 1):

- Disable person, a person having certificate of disability issued by the certified physician [21] and

- Pupil with special education need – a certificate of special education need is issued by psychologist of psychological-pedagogical advisory centre, establish in every region [20].

Tab. 1. A comparison of dysfunctions of disabled people and of pupils with special educational needs.

Reasons of disability	Pupils with special education need
Mental disability (01-U)	Mental disability: light, medium, strong (including autism)
Mental illnesses (02-P)	Mental disorders
Dysfunctions of voice, speech and hearing diseases (03-L)	Deaf, hard of hearing, blind
Eyes diseases (04-O)	
Locomotors system disabilities (05-R)	Locomotors system disabilities
Epilepsy (06-E)	
Respiratory system and circulatory system illnesses (07-S)	
Digestive system illnesses (08-T)	
Urogenital system illnesses (09-M)	
Neurological illnesses (10-N)	
Other: endocrinological illnesses, metabolic illnesses, infectious diseases (11-I)	
Developmental disorders (12-C)	
	Chronic diseases
	Unadjusted socially, risk of social unadjustement
	Risk of addiction
	Abnormal behaviour

Source: on the basis of [17, 18, 19 20, 21]

Most pupils with dysfunctions have both certificates. However there is group of pupils only with certificate of disability, what will be important for being employed as a disable person in future. Those pupils will not receive individual educational programs as they do not belong to the group of pupils with special educational needs. There is the same situation with pupils with certificate of special educational needs – not all of them are disabled.

In Poland system education of pupils with special educational needs is an integrated part of educational system. It is regulated by The Act on Education [20] and specific regulations of Ministry of Education. Students with special educational needs are educated in kindergarten and other forms of pre schooling education, primary schools, lower secondary schools, secondary schools and three year schools adopting for work. It is carried out in “special” and in regular schools with „special”, integrated or regular classes. Special education is organized for those, who are not adjusted for the society and for those who require to use special organization and specific methods of education. They can be educated in all types of schools accordingly to their individual needs of development, needs of education and skills. There are

created individual programs, forms and processes of education and revalidation programmes for disabled. Disabled pupils educate in regular schools and classes offering facilities and infrastructure adapted for disabled needs (e.g. lifts, driveways for disabled).

Research question and methodology

The article discussed following research question: How educational system increases chances of disabled pupils to enter the labour market?

Sub-questions:

- What school activities in preparation of disabled pupils to increase their changes to enter the labour market?
- How is organised vocational advisory system for disabled pupils?
- How is organised cooperation between schools and employers and other organisations for disabled people?
- How Polish regulations of employment of disabled are evaluated by teachers and tutors of disables?

The methodology of research covered:

In-depth Interview (IDI) conducted among representatives (mainly schools directors and pedagogues) of schools educating disabled pupils – sample of 27 schools and 40 respondents (Tab. 2). Researches were carried out in following types of schools:

- 19 out of 42 special schools in Silesia Region (45.23%). Total number of pupils: 3310 with certificate of special education. Number of disabled pupils: 1751 (52.90%).

- 2 schools with integrated classes. Total number of pupils: 556. Number of disabled pupils: 32 (5.76%).

- 2 regular schools: Total number of pupils: 628. Number of disabled pupils: 21 (3.34%).

- 3 out of 16 Special Educational Centres in Silesia Region (18.75%). Total number of pupils: 300. Number of disabled pupils: 162 (54.00%).

- 1 Centre of Vocational and Practical Training. Total number of pupils: 1000. Number of disabled pupils: 20 (2.00%).

Tab. 2. Information of respondents.

Sex	N	%
Female	26	65.00%
Male	14	35.00%
<i>Total</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>100.00%</i>
Position	N	%
School director	24	60.00%
Teacher of general studies	5	12.50%
Pedagogue	8	20.00%
Accountant	1	2.50%
Teacher of practical vocational training	1	2.50%
Psychologists	1	2.50%
<i>Total</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>100.00%</i>
Years of service	N	%
Less than 3	3	7.50%
4 - 10	8	20.00%
11 - 20	14	35.00%
More than 20	15	37.50%
<i>Total</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>100.00%</i>

Researches were carried out between February and July 2013 in Silesia Region. The article presents a part of the research project titled “Innovative Platform of Cooperation for the employment of disabled people” cofounded by the European Union (financial mechanism: Human Capital 7.2.1 – Professional and social activation of people at risk of social exclusion).

Results and discussion

Highest employment rates of disabled people in Europe are in Austria – 67.17% [15] and Sweden – 62% [16] whereas in Poland it was 14.8% in 2012 [1]. Although the available data do not refer to the same year, there is a big gap between those countries. To increase of activity of disabled people on labour market there is need to integrate activities of various institutions responsible for problems of employment of disabled. Schools and psychological-pedagogical advisory centre are the first

institutions where disabled pupil will offer the help and will learn an occupation, job searching methods and learn how to exist in society and cope on labour market. Studies indicated that apart from school programmes and obligatory activities disabled pupils in schools have many possibilities to develop their skills necessary for labour market existence (Tab. 3).

Availability of vocational advisory is high (Tab. 4). The most schools offer individual consultations with career officer - available in 23 schools (85.19%). In 21 schools (77.78%) pedagogues, class teachers and other teachers provide consultations of vocational advisory. 14 schools (51.85%) organises workshops on career planning and in 12 schools (44.44%) disabled pupils participate in periodic group courses on rules of searching job and being active on labour market. Disabled form 6 schools (22.22%) have chance to visit School Career Office (established in every city).

Tab. 3. What schools do to prepare disabled pupils to enter the labour market (N=27)?

Category	N	%
Vocational advisory: individual and in groups	27	100.00%
Participation in job fairs and entrepreneurship days	7	25.93%
Workshops in psychological-pedagogical advisory	3	11.11%
Car ring out project cofounded form UE	3	11.11%
Workshop with Carter officer form recruitment Office	3	11.11%
Workshop with pedagogue	3	11.11%
Workshops of creativity skills, education for good existence in society	2	7.41%
Workshops of methods of effective job search methods	2	7.41%
Conferences for disabled pupils and about their problems	1	3.70%
Total*	48	177.00%

* - respondents could indicate more than one answer

Tab. 4. Availability of vocational advisory for disabled pupils in opinion of school representatives (N=27).

Category	N	%
Consultations with career officer at school	23	85.19%
Consultations with pedagogue	21	77.78%
Consultations with class teachers and Rother teachers	21	77.78%
Workshops on career planning	14	51.85%
Periodic group courses on searching Job and being active on Labour market	12	44.44%
Visits in School Career Office	6	22.22%
„I Do not know” answer	1	3.70%
Total*	98	362.96%

* - respondents could indicate more than one answer

Studies also provided the answer for question: How disables pupils plan their educational paths and career?, which is very important for development of vocational advisory. In the opinion of school representatives most disabled pupils r a support of pedagogue (22 answers, 55.00%). 21 respondents stated that disabled make those decisions together with family (52.50%). Other teachers help in career planning in the opinion of half respondents (50.00%). Career officer support is necessary for disabled in the opinion of 12 schools representatives (30.00%). 11 interweaved (27.50%) stated that disabled in their schools make decision on career by themselves and only 8 (20.00%) concluded that this decision is not independent and it is family’s decision (Tab. 5).

In 2012 in Gliwice City there were carried out research among non-disabled pupils on making decisions of career planning [13]. 68.30% of pupils (N=3835) stated that decisions are made by

themselves. Family (21.20%) and friends (18.20%) helped pupils in making these decisions.

Comparing those results it is appeared that vocational advisory system has much more influence on disabled pupils decisions. The more difficult and dynamic labour market the greater responsibility of career officers, pedagogues and teachers. Although school representatives find that vocational advisory system should be more available for each pupil [13], the first task for local government is to support vocational advisory for disabled pupils. Respondents were also asked about scope of cooperation between schools and employers (Tab. 6) and organizations responsible for the support for disabled people.

The biggest group of schools organises vocational trainings in cooperation with employers (48.15%). Respondents in 10 schools (37.04%) did not answer these questions.

Tab. 5. How disabled pupils plan their educational development and career? – opinions of school representatives (N=40).

Category	N	%
Support of school pedagogue	22	55.00%
Support of family	21	52.50%
Support of class teacher and other teacher, e.g. teacher of vocational training	20	50.00%
Support of career officer	18	45.00%
Support form expert of psychological- pedagogical advisory centre	12	30.00%
Decision made indecently by disabled	11	27.50%
Family make decision for disabled	8	20.00%
Total*	112	280%

* - respondents could indicate more than one answer

Tab. 6. The scope of cooperation between schools educating disabled pupils and employers (N=27).

Category	N	%
Organisation of vocational trainings and internships	14	51.85%
Study visits in firms	12	44.44%
Participation in job fairs	11	40.74%
Meetings for pupils with employers	8	29.63%
Partner agreement	3	11.11%
Classes with patronage	1	3.70%
Anonymous Support of employers	1	3.70%
Visits in recruitment offices	1	3.70%
Non-official cooperation based on private contacts	1	3.70%
Total*	56	207.41%

* - respondents could indicate more than one answer

Cooperation of schools with organisations and institutions for the support of disabled people is well developed. Only 3 schools of 27 (11.11%) do not cooperate with those organisation: 1 school for the reason of no need of such cooperation, 2 schools for the reason of no interest on these organisations. Other 25 schools (88.11%) undertake activities mainly with organisations in their cities and regions. 9 schools (33.33%) cooperate with offices of cities' major representatives for disabled. None school cooperates with national organisations for employers of disabled people. Labour market for disabled people seen for the perspective of schools representatives brings a lot

of difficulties. School representatives stated that polish regulations are not conducive to employ disabled people (Tab. 7). There are formal barriers (e.g. necessity to adjust workplace, guaranty of longer breaks and longer holidays) – 30%, lack of knowledge of regulations – 27.5%, lack of financial encouragement – 25%. 65.2% interweaved find that polish employers are not positively attitude to employ disabled people. Finally, 5 % of respondents agreed that polish regulations support of the employment of disabled.

The majority of respondents find that polish employers have negative attitude to employ disabled pupils (25; 62.5%).

Tab. 7. Polish regulations on the employment of disabled in the opinion of school representatives (N=40).

Category	N	%
Requirements for employers discourage to employ disabled people	12	30.00%
Employers do not have knowledge of regulations and do not know what determinants of the employment of disabled are.	11	27.50%
Polish regulations do not support the employment of disabled people. the companies do not pay to hire disabled people	10	25.00%
“Hard to say” answer	8	20.00%
Polish regulations support the employment of disabled people.	2	5.00%
Total*	43	107.50%*

* - respondents could indicate more than one answer

Tab. 8. Attitude of employers to employ disabled pupils in the opinion of school representatives (N=40).

Category	N	%
Polish employers have positive attitude to employ disabled pupils	1	2.50%
Polish employers have negative attitude to employ disabled pupils	25	62.50%
“Hard to say” answer	14	35.00%
Total	40	100.00%

Conclusions

The school educating disabled pupils is a “link” and “bridge” between disabled pupils and labour market. Disabled pupils need much more support connected with preparation for labour market than able pupils. School play a double role, firstly - educational and secondly – as an advisory centre. Disabled graduates are not as active on labour market as able graduates [6]. Conclusions of Jachmiczak research [6] correlates with authors results that educational system has much to improve in preparation disabled pupils to exist on labour market, especially that activities of recruitment offices are not effective enough in the assistance for disabled people.

Activities of vocational advisory in schools for disabled pupils are much more integrated with educational processes than in regular schools. Individual educational programmes are more

flexible and teachers have more opportunity to include problems of labour market existence in regular lessons. In vocational schools for able pupils they are obliged to find a firm to complete vocational training by themselves. Because the majority of disabled pupils is not as independent as able pupils and tutors of vocational training in special schools help them in finding vocational training. Doing this the school develop its net of contacts with employers. Most of them when start cooperation with special school and with disabled pupils is satisfied with their work. Although polish regulations are not conducive to employment of disabled schools undertake many initiatives to show labour market mechanisms for disabled pupils, through organising meetings with employers, study visits in firms, taking part in job fairs and taking part in project for disabled people cofounded mainly from European Union.

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