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***EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN THE REPUBLIC OF
MOLDOVA:
ANALYSIS AND PERSPECTIVES***

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Abstract

The current situation of the employment of disabled people in the Republic of Moldova through the prism of integration in European Union is analyzed in this paper. The relevant recommendations for improving the situation with employment of disabled people in the country on the basis of international experience were proposed by the authors. The actuality of this topic stems from the fact that the number of disabled people in Republic of Moldova continually grows and on one side they encounter problems in entering the labour market, on the other side, an important share of human potential for the economic development is not utilized and there is a lack of covering the need to enjoy equal opportunities as other people. The purpose of this research is to highlight the problems of disabled people in the labour market of the Republic of Moldova and to propose the measures for the implementation of good practice from EU in this domain. In the process of developing this work were used the following research methods: analysis of the statistical data, comparative analysis, legal analysis, synthesis, monographic. The results of the research consist in the elaboration of specific measures in this area on the basis of comprehensive analysis.

Keywords: *disabled people, employment, policy framework, EU's experience.*

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Introduction

One of the most vulnerable groups of people that are greatly exposed to the risk of poverty and social exclusion are the ones with disabilities. As stated by the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* [11] the disability is seen as “an evolving concept” that is caused by “interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. The Convention stresses the importance of adopting a bio-psycho-social model of disability that will focus more on social barriers that prevent disabled people from fully exercising their rights as citizens rather than on bio-psychic (medical) side of the disability. In fact, it’s a synthesis of social and medical models. The implementation of this new model it’s hoped to reduce the deficiencies of the traditional medical model that puts more emphasis on medical condition of disabled persons.

Although Moldova ratified the CRPD in 2010, there is a significant difference between Moldova’s and UN’s definitions of disability. Based on National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova the disability is considered “as worsening health disorders accompanied by stable body functions disorder, subject to disease, trauma or defects consequences, which restrict the vital activity of man and lead to the need for social protection of this person” [4, p.185]. This definition is more precise than the one in CRPD, but it’s based solely on medical model of disability.

According to *article 2 from Law No. 60 from 30.03.2012 on social inclusion of persons with disabilities* disability refers to “activity limitations and participation restrictions, which denote the negative aspects of the interaction between the individual (who has a health problem) and contextual factors that can be found (environmental and personal factors)” [18]. The definition given by the law is more adjusted to the one from Convention than the definition by Statistics Bureau, but at the same time it’s not mentioning about participation on equal basis. This aspect is stated in an anti-discrimination law adopted later – *Law No. 121 from 25.05.2012 on ensuring equality*. [19]

Based on global data from *World Report on Disability* (2011) there are 785 millions of disabled people or 15.6% of world population that are 15 years old or older. Their employment rate is significantly lower than for the non-disabled people (53% and 20% for disabled men and, respectively, for non-disabled women versus 65% for non-disabled men and, respectively, 30% for non-disabled women). In EU-27 in 2012 there were 70 millions of people aged 15 and older who reported being disabled, which is 17.6% of population [30, pp.8-11][12].

The disabled people in Moldova are an important minority group of population that encounters difficulties regarding to employment. On top of that, in the world, in EU or in Moldova people with disabilities share similar problems related to discrimination, limited access to services, inadequate infrastructure, difficulties in being employed and in the workplace and other issues. It’s deemed necessary to determine the current situation of disabled people in labour market, taking into account that they represent an important share

of population and the problems they face as people from a vulnerable group and to identify the best practices from the EU countries that could be used in ameliorating the problems encountered by disabled people in the labour market in Moldova.

As a final introductory remark we must say that we use the terms “disabled persons/people” and “persons/people with disabilities” interchangeably.

Literature review

At the international level, the topic of disabled people’s employment is studied both from a medical standpoint by different types of disability and from the social perspective using a holistic approach. Different aspects of disabled people’s employment were researched by *P. Wehman* (employment and public policies for people with intellectual disabilities, especially autism spectrum disorders), *F. Chan* (employer practices and rehabilitation of disabled people), *R.E. Cimera* (employment policies for people with intellectual disabilities) and others.

Chan et al. (2010) [8, p. 408] found that employers are more accepting to employ disabled people when they have a small supply for workers with qualifications in jobs that are highly demanded. In the study of *Cimera (2008)* [9, p.19] it was discovered, based on a study on people with mental retardation that sheltered workshops are costlier in the long-term than the supported employment. In *Fraser et al (2011)* [14, p.3] it is found that large companies are more likely to employ people with disabilities than smaller enterprises, due to lesser associated costs. *Fuchs (2015)* [15, pp.6-7] evaluated quotas’ effectiveness in employment for disabled people. *Wehman (2012)* [29, pp. 139-140] studies the definition and evolution of supported employment for people with disabilities. *Shima, Zólyomi and Zaidi (2008)* [26, pp.1-3] studied the labour market situation of disabled people and compared the measures in different EU countries regarding the employment of disabled people.

At the national level this topic was studied in: Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDSI) ”Viitorul”, Institute of Legal and Political Research, National Institute for Economic Research (NIER). The employment of disabled people is studied, especially in the works of *L. Gavriliță* (from a socio-economical perspective) and *M. Pavlencu* (from a legal perspective) as well as others. Their most relevant publications on the topic include the following ones: Antonov, Gavriliță and Gamanji (2010) that focus on inclusion of disabled people, their social protection and equal opportunities, Cârnaț, Pavlencu and Costișanu (2016) on choosing between the term “people with disabilities” or “people with specific needs”, Pavlencu’s PhD thesis from 2016 on legal framework for disabled people in Moldova.

Policy framework

In the *Table 1* are indicated the most relevant acts at international, European and national level regarding people with disabilities.

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Table 1. International, European and national acts related to employment of disabled people

The name of the act and the year/date of coming into force	The adopted law in Moldova*
<i>International Acts</i>	
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, drafted in 2006	Legea nr.166 din 09.07.2010 {Law no.166 from 09.07.2010}
ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention No. 159, 1983	-
<i>European Union Legislative Acts</i>	
Council Directive 89/654/EEC of 30 November 1989 concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace (first individual directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)	
Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)	
Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work	
2008/618/EC: Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States	
Council Decision of 21 October 2010 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (2010/707/EU)	
Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1023/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 amending the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union	
Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty	
Council Resolution of 15 July 2003 on promoting the employment and social integration of people with disabilities	
<i>Laws and strategies of Republic of Moldova* (adopted and drafts)</i>	
CODUL MUNCII AL REPUBLICII MOLDOVA, Nr. 154 din 28.03.2003 {LABOUR CODE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, No. 154 from 28.03.2003}	
Legea Nr. 60 din 30.03.2012 privind incluziunea socială a persoanelor cu dizabilități {Law No. 60 from 30.03.2012 on social inclusion of persons with disabilities}	
Legea Nr. 121 din 25.05.2012 cu privire la asigurarea egalității {Law No. 121 from 25.05.2012 on ensuring equality}	
Legea Nr. 166 din 09.07.2010 pentru ratificarea Convenției Organizației Națiunilor Unite privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități {Law No. 166 from 09.07.2010 for ratification of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities}	
Legea Nr. 909 din 30.01.1992 privind protecția socială a cetățenilor care au avut de suferit de pe urma catastrofei de la Cernobâl (Law No. 909 from 30.01.1992 on social protection of citizens who suffered from the Chernobyl disaster)	
Legea Nr. 169 din 09.07.2010 pentru aprobarea Strategiei de incluziune socială a persoanelor cu dizabilități (2010–2013) {Law No. 169 from 09.07.2010 for approbation of the Strategy of social inclusion of persons with disabilities (2010-2013)}	
Hotărârea de Guvern Nr. 65 din 23.01.2013 cu privire la determinarea dizabilității și capacității de muncă {Government Decision No. 65 from 23.01.2013 on the determination of disability and	

working capacity}
Hotărârea de Guvern Nr. 1025 din 28.12.2012 cu privire la aprobarea Programului Național privind sănătatea mintală pentru anii 2012-2016 {Government Decision No. 1025 from 28.12.2012 on the endorsement of the National Mental Health Programme for the years 2012-2016}
Proiectul Strategiei Naționale privind Ocuparea Forței de Muncă și a Matricei de Acțiuni pentru anii 2017-2021 {Draft of National Strategy for Employment of Workforce and Matrix of Actions for the years 2017-2021}

Source: Elaborated by the authors on the basis of [5, pp.68-73]

**In brackets “{}” is written the unofficial English translation*

The United Nations Organization drafted in 2006 the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* that was signed by Republic of Moldova in 30 March 2007 and ratified on 21 September 2010 through the *Law No. 166 from 09.07.2010* (159 from 197 states signed it, but only 152 ratified it [23]) [20]. In 1983 International Labour Organization (ILO) drafted the *Convention No. 159, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment* (for disabled people). 83 countries from 187 ratified it [24] [6]. Moldova didn't ratify it, because at the time it was draft Moldova was part of USSR that, probably, did not have such a priority.

At the national level there are many laws, government decisions and strategies that are directly or indirectly referred to people with disabilities, but some of the most relevant to their employment are written in the table above. In the Labour Code of Moldova [10] there are several provisions concerning disabled persons. They refer to: prohibition of discrimination in employment relationships and at setting and payment of wages; interdiction of probation period when concluding individual employment contract; a shortened working time of 30 hours per week without loss of wages and other rights for people with severe and accentuated disabilities; establishing the daily working time by the medical certificate; people with severe and accentuated disabilities having the right to perform additional (extra) work, work at night, during weekends or holidays and continuous shift work and employers being obliged to inform them in written form about the right to refuse such work; additional paid annual leave lasting at least 4 days for persons with visual disabilities; giving the preferential right to be left to work in case of equal qualifications and labour productivity for disabled from the war and persons with disabilities for which it is established the causal link between the occurrence of disability and the accident at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant; persons with severe and accentuated disabilities being able to be sent to go on official journeys only with their own agreement and employers being obliged to inform them in written form about the right to refuse to go on official journeys.

In the *Law on social inclusion of people with disabilities* [18] the entire chapter V is dedicated to integration of disabled people in employment. It contains provisions about: their right to work; employment; work at home; specialized enterprises; obligations of employers concerning employment of the people who lost their work capacity; working time; production standards; leave; professional orientation, training and rehabilitation. It's worthy to note that for disabled people a quota of 5% from total number of jobs is established in enterprises that

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have 20 employees or more. Other special measures for disabled workers include: the annual leave to be at least 40 calendar days for those with severe disabilities and 32 calendar days for the ones with accentuated disabilities; an additional unpaid leave for up to 60 calendar days at the request of disabled person. For people with severe and accentuated disabilities it sets a shortened working time of at least 30 hours per week, the pay being equal to that established for employees with the normal working time.

The *Law on ensuring equality* [19] has the objective to prevent and combat discrimination based on disability, including in the labour market.

Another act is the *Law for approbation of the Strategy of social inclusion of persons with disabilities (2010-2013)*. [21] The Strategy it approves is a precondition for the ratification and implementation of CRPD's provisions. It underlines the low level of employment for disabled people that is caused by the labour market's high competitiveness and poor coordination between social protection for this group and their employment, the prevalence in using the medical model of disability that does not stimulate the integration and reintegration of disabled persons in labour market, the lack of financial coverage and of a sufficient number of qualitative mechanisms and services for guidance, training and vocational rehabilitation for these people and the missing of coherent social integration of disabled people into the labour market. The Strategy also punctuates the rare and insufficient monitoring of rights of disabled persons to work and their segregation that deepens the dependence on social benefits, instead of focusing on social and economic participation of these persons.

There is a law that protects the rights of the citizens with disabilities from the Chernobyl disaster - *Law on social protection of citizens who suffered from the Chernobyl disaster* [22]. This law has special provisions for them. Some of them are the following: having priority in the enrollment in cooperatives for construction of housing and building garages, in fruit-growing associations; receiving temporary disability allowance equal to 100% of salary, regardless of the length of uninterrupted work; receiving allowance for temporary incapacity for work for up to 4 months in a row or up to 5 months during a year for disabled people who work; receiving up to 4 months the pay of the difference between salary levels when switching with doctor's recommendation to a job with a lower salary. This difference is paid by enterprises, institutions and organizations until the restoration of work capacity or until the establishment of disability.

The *Government Decision on the determination of disability and working capacity* [16] establishes the structure of National Council for Determining Disability and Work Capacity and the regulations on its organization and functioning. This Decision states the differences between the degrees of disability. The most important difference refers to work capacity. The severe disability signifies a work capacity of 0-20%, the accentuated disability – 25-40%, the medium disability – 45-60%. The persons that have the work capacity of 65-100% are not considered disabled.

Another one, *Government Decision on the endorsement of the National Mental Health Programme for the years 2012-2016* [17] underlines the problems of mentally disabled people including the right to be employed, that is undermined by weak coordination between medical institutions and employment agencies and emphasizes the need of elaborating a legal framework for ensuring that employers will create jobs for them.

Currently, Government is working on the *Draft of National Strategy for Employment for the years 2017-2021*, where are taken into consideration the problems of disabled people. In the *Figure 1* are shown the corresponding actions regarding these persons.

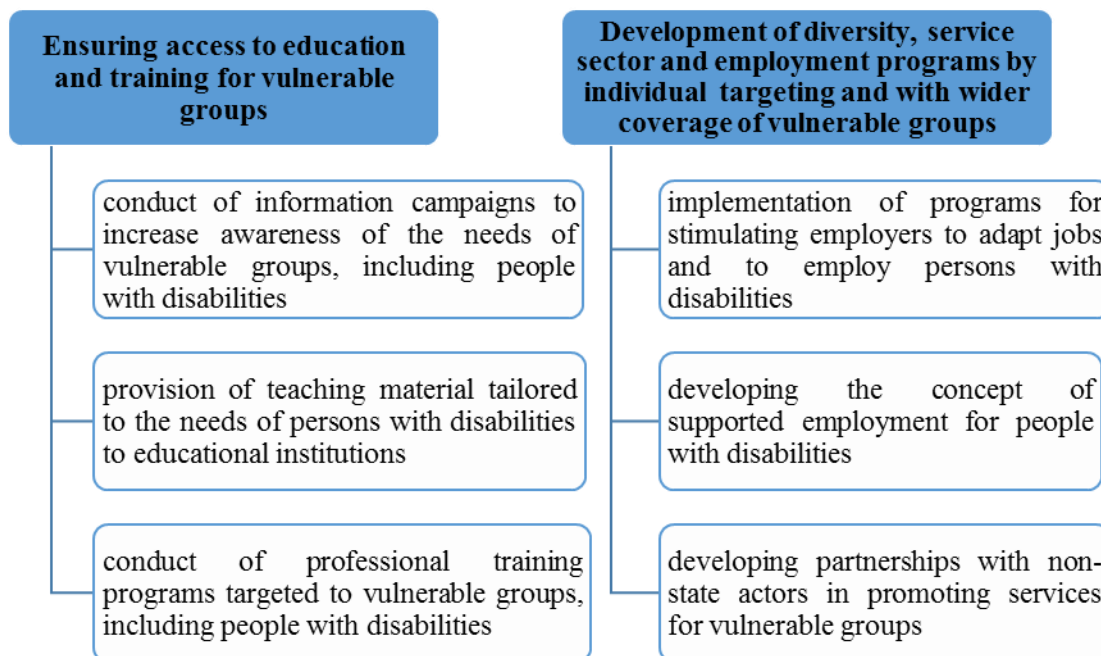


Figure 1. Actions regarding disabled persons in the *Draft of National Strategy for Employment of Workforce and Matrix of Actions for the years 2017-2021*

Source: Elaborated by the authors on the basis of [19, pp. 37-46]

Current situation in Republic of Moldova

According to the data of National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova (NBS) from 2015 [27] there were 184.5 thousands of people with disabilities in Moldova or circa 5.2% of country's population. 171.6 thousands of disabled people were 18 years old and older. From 2011 their number grew constantly, in total, by 5.1 thousands. From the total number of disabled persons 52.4% are men and 62% live in rural areas. From rural population 5.57% are disabled and from urban population 4.61% have disabilities. In 96.3% of cases the disability was caused by common diseases and in 1.9% of cases – by work accidents and professional diseases. 39.9% of disabled people are in the age group of 30-54 years old and 41.1% - in the group of 55-64 years old, 17.6% are 65 years old or older.

Based on the data of selective study Households Budget Survey only 46.7% of people with disabilities that are 15 years old or older are employed. For comparison, 67.4% of people without disabilities have a job. The employment of disabled people depends on disability degree: only 14.7% are employed with a severe disability, 50.5% - with accentuated

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disability and 66.5% - with medium disability. As we see, the percentage of employed disabled people with medium disability is comparable to the share of employed persons without disabilities and the share of employed disabled persons with severe disability is much smaller than in the case of other disabled persons with a lesser degree.

By occupational status, two-thirds (67.6%) of persons with disabilities are self-employed in agriculture, in comparison with 55.2% for non-disabled people and only nearly one quarter (24.3%) are salary employees (34.9% for non-disabled), 3.7% are self-employed in non-agricultural activities (7.2% of non-disabled), 4.1% of people with disabilities work as unpaid family workers (2.4% of people without disabilities) and only 0.3% of disabled persons are patrons (the same share as non-disabled). 76.9% of the people with disabilities self-employed in agriculture were living in rural areas, while 72.3% of urban disabled people were salary employees. As we see, people with disabilities have a lower occupational status than the persons without disabilities.

From salaried employees the disabled people consisted only 0.9%. From all salaried employees in health and social assistance worked 1.8% of people with disabilities, 1.3% of them – in industry, 0.9% - in public administration, education, art and recreational activities, 0.8% - in agriculture. From the disabled people that are salaried employees 26.5% work in industry, 25.7% - in public administration, education, art and recreational activities, 19.0% - in health and social assistance, 8.7% - in other activities, 6.8% - in agriculture, forestry and phishing, 6.0% - in transport and storage, 4.1% - in wholesale and retail trade, 2.1% - in information and communications, 1.3% - in constructions and 8.7% - in other activities.

In public works in 2015 were involved 52 unemployed people with disabilities (16 were women and 36 – from rural areas), which represent 3% of the total unemployed (compared to 19 people in 2014, of which 6 were women and 11 rural inhabitants). The monthly allowance for unemployment in 2015 amounted to 1251.6 MDL (~60 Euros*). [22, p.22]

In 2015 the State Labour Inspectorate carried out visits to businesses that had 20 or more employees to determine how the provisions of Law on social inclusion on persons with disabilities were respected. The results of the findings showed that 174 companies had reserved 471 jobs for disabled persons, 215 enterprises had 713 workers with disabilities, 102 economic units track job applications of disabled persons and 24 companies informed the territorial agencies for employment of workforce about the jobs they reserved for disabled persons. [22, p.35]

In 2015, 1688 people that were unemployed due to prolonged illness until the occurrence of disability have received material aid in the total amount of 1589.2 thousands MDL (~76 thousands Euros) or 941 MDL (~45 Euros) on average per person. [22, p.84]

Between people with disabilities, disabled women are in a more precarious situation, according to the data of Households Budget Survey from 2014. By occupational status, 77.7% of women with disabilities are self-employed in agriculture, where only 45.2% of women without disabilities work, 16.3% from employed disabled women are salaried employees, while 49.5% of employed non-disabled women work for a salary. 5.2% of the disabled women were unpaid family workers, a share 2 times higher than for women without

* The average yearly exchange rate in 2015: 1 Euro=20.8980 Moldovan lei (MDL) [28]

disabilities (2.6%). Women self-employed in non-agricultural activities occupied a much smaller proportion – 0.8%, compared to 2.5% of employed women without a disability. Only 10.9% of disabled women are employed, a share by 3 times lower than in the case of non-disabled women - 36.5%. 82% of self-employed disabled women that work in agriculture are from rural areas, 38% from urban disabled women are salaried employees. 84% of disabled women who are salaried employees work in agriculture, 10% of the salaried disabled women that have medium or accentuated disability work in health, education, trade and industry. 98% of women with disabilities received professional counseling. In 2014 in Moldova was organized the first job fair for people with disabilities where 100 disabled people participated. [16, pp.19-21]

According to the Activity Report of National Agency for Employment for Workforce (NAEW), circa 400 economic units informed territorial agencies of employment for workforce of dismissals of 6.1 thousands of employees, from which disabled people were 2%. From 96.3 thousands of people who received professional counseling and information 1.6% were disabled. 77 people with disabilities from 221 people in total completed professional training courses [20, pp.7-12].

In the **Figure 2** we can see the evolution of the registered unemployed disabled people at NAEW and the ones who were employed. The number of disabled people that registered as unemployed grew constantly from 2011 until 2015 (~1.8 times). From those 877, 39% were women. At the same time the number of the ones placed in jobs increased, as well, but at a faster rate and from 2010 (~4.2 times). This can be seen in the evolution of percentage of those placed in employment (from 13.3% in 2010 to 37.0% in 2014 or by circa 2.8 times), but in 2015 the proportion of employed reduced a little. This reduction is caused by a faster growth of unemployed from 2014 to 2015 (+46.7%) than the increase of employed in the same period (+36.4%).

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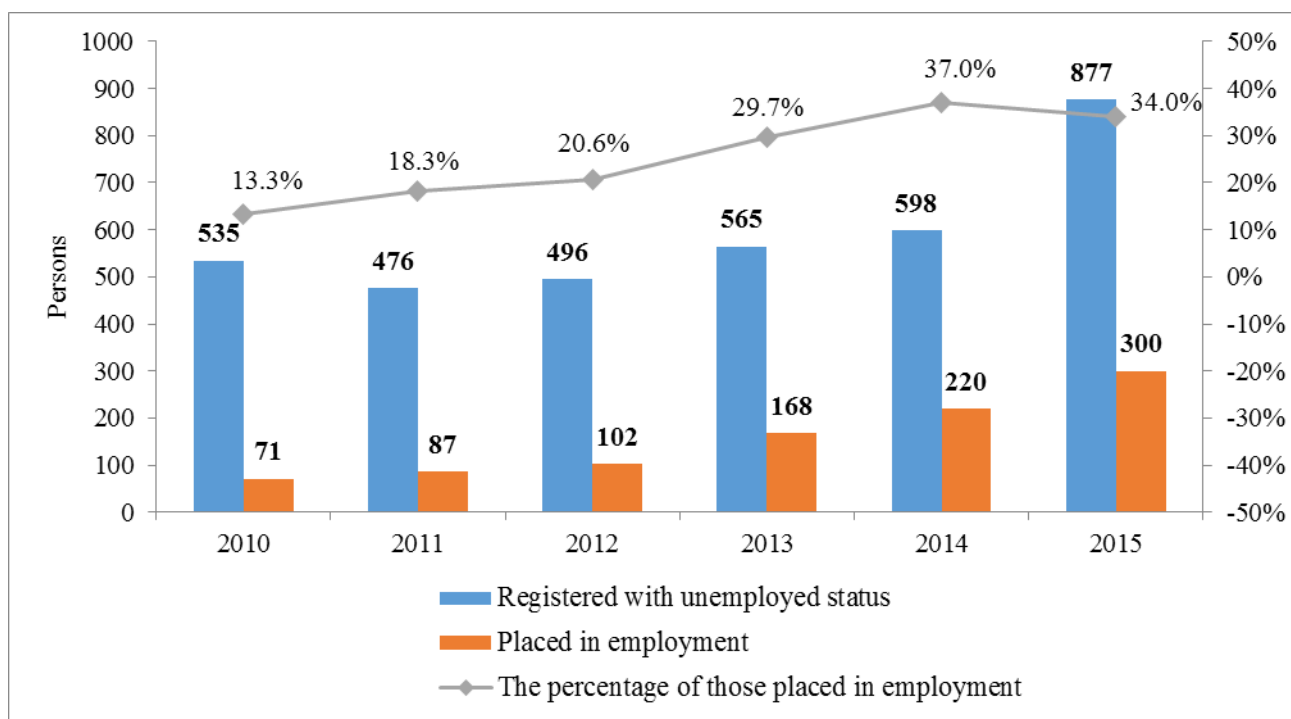


Figure 2. Evolution of the registered unemployed people with disabilities and the ones that were employed

Source: Elaborated by the authors on the basis of [20, p.13]

In the **Figure 3** is shown the evolution of disabled people that were beneficiaries of NAEW during the period 2010-2015. As is seen in the graph the number of people with disabilities who benefited from informing and professional counseling services has grown from 2010 to 2013 from 386 to 1976 persons, that is more than 5 times (!) and only in the 2012-2013 period the number grew over 3 times. This growth is followed by a strong decrease until 2015 when there were only 36 beneficiaries. In 2012-2015 the number of disabled people who got labour mediation services has increased continuously after the decline from 2010-2012. We suppose that one of the causes of these evolutions is the substitution of informing and professional counseling by mediation. The graph shows a growth of the disabled people who graduated from vocational training courses and the ones engaged in public works. At the same time the number of the persons who got unemployment benefits increased significantly, while the number of beneficiaries of allowances for integration or reintegration didn't show important changes.

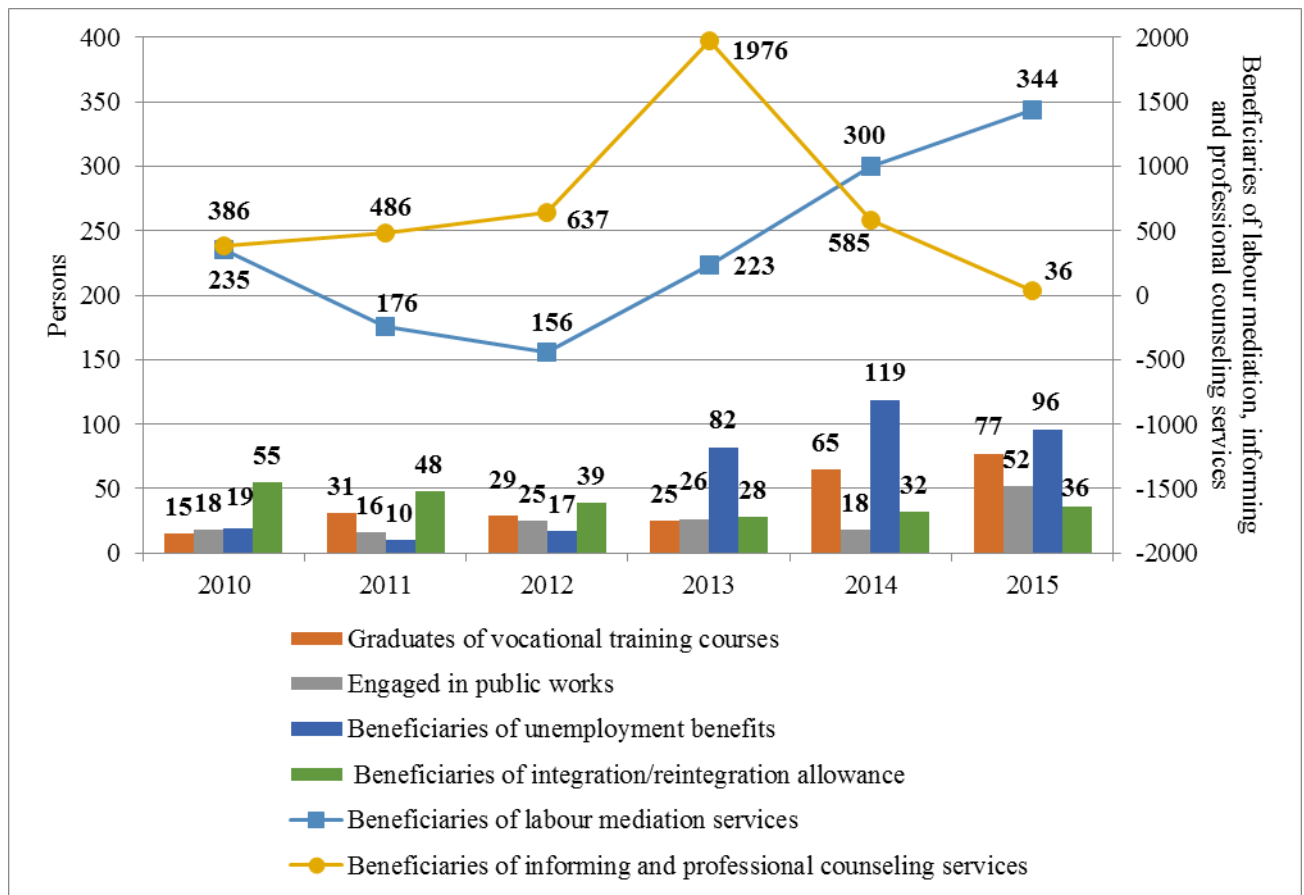


Figure 3. Evolution of the number of beneficiaries of NAEW services and activities

Source: Elaborated by the authors on the basis of [20, p.13]

From the people with disabilities who registered at NAEW 40% or 352 persons had been in the age group of 50-62 years old. The most easily placed in employment were young people from 16 to 29 years old (40%). 50% of disabled people hadn't a qualification or a profession. 77 people with disabilities followed vocational training courses, from which 44 were employed. The most demanded jobs or professions were: PC operators – 27.3%, accountants – 9.1%, barbers – 6.5%, cooks – 6.5%. The majority of disabled persons registered in territorial agencies for employment of workforce were in the following agencies: Chisinau (206 people or 23.5%), Balti (49 persons or 5.6%), Sangerei (40 persons or 4.6%), Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia (39 persons or 4.3%). The agency from Chisinau placed in employment 91 persons, the one from Sangerei – 24, the agency from Gagauzia – 16 persons. [20, pp.13-15]

With the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities the territorial agencies for employment of workforce in the period 28.11 - 06.12.2016 organised different events to help unemployed with disabilities with: free professional integration courses; involving economic agents in hiring of disabled persons; informing about their legal rights, discrimination in employment, employment opportunities, different services that can help

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them; empowerment for social inclusion and employment, finding jobs and adapting to job's environment and other activities. [1]

In empowerment of people with disabilities are involved the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well. For example, the Association "MOTIVATIE" of Moldova in the period 14-25.11.2016 made a training inside the project "Angajează abilitatea" (Engage, employ ability) where people with disabilities from different parts of the country got practical advices for how to get employed. [25]

Another NGO, Keystone Human Services International Moldova Association works towards deinstitutionalization of disabled persons and offers them support for development of social entrepreneurship, in particular for small businesses, by giving them business training and financial resources for starting business and helping them with the development of business plan, specialized mentoring in the first 3 months after starting the business. Some concrete examples of such business include: a car repair shop; a greenhouse for growing vegetables; a mini farm for growing rabbits; a mini farm for raising quail and services of kinetotherapy at home. [3]

The NGO ProAbility is specialized solely on fostering entrepreneurship between blind people to reduce their social exclusion. During the period 2012-2016 it helped 38 disabled persons with 435 000 MDL (~20 815 Euros). It offers training, mentoring, financial assistance (the maximum amount is 15 000 MDL (~718 Euros) where a half of it is offered as a grant and the other half is given as a loan), payment of the interest rate for the contracted investment loan for the first 2 years (the maximum amount of loan is 50 000 MDL (~2 393 Euros)). The shop "Nou din Nou" that sells household products is an example of social business created with the help of ProAbility NGO. [18]

The Institute for Public Policies from Moldova made a sociological survey in 2014. The sample contained 1070 adult persons from 211 sampling points in 84 localities. The maximal error was 3% and the survey was representative for the whole country. 25.7% of surveyed considered people with mental disabilities the most discriminated group in Moldova, while 23.9% said that physically disabled people are the most discriminated group. 50.5% from the people said that disabled persons were discriminated against when being hired frequently and 27.7% said – very frequently. 49.6% considered that disabled people are discriminated in the workplace frequently and 19.9% - very frequently. Only 24.9% said they would accept a mentally disabled person as a co-worker. At the question if disabled people are incapable to work 48.2% rather don't agree, 15.4% don't agree and 24.1% rather agree and 7.4% totally agree. 58.8% fully agree and 30.1% rather agree that employers should provide special jobs for disabled people. [13, pp.2-19]

In a recent study, *Stratan D.* (2016) [28, p.7], in which 593 people were interviewed in some regions of Moldova (from which 215 were young entrepreneurs and 378 - individuals) it was shown that 43% of them would develop social missions in their companies or social enterprises if they had financial support from the state, 32% wanted fiscal advantages, 17% would do this with their own initiative and 8% stated they would comply if the law requires. As we see, 83% of the ones interviewed want to be extrinsically stimulated and only 17% have an internal motivation to follow a social cause or to create a social business. The findings of this study need to be considered in employment policies for people with disabilities, therefore the state authorities need to be more involved.

Currently, the authors work in an applied institutional project concerning Harmonization of development policy of micro, small and medium enterprises in Moldova with the 'Small Business Act' for Europe (2015-2018). One target category of the research are the potential and existing entrepreneurs from socially vulnerable groups of the population, including the disabled people.

In 2007 was drafted the National strategy on employment policies 2007-2015, but due to factors that influenced the implementation of employment policies, it has not achieved its objectives. These factors include: global crises, unstable political situation, economic crisis in the country, limited cooperation between institutions, low capacity of public institutions, insufficient funding. Currently is in process of drafting the National Strategy for Employment of Workforce 2017-2021, in which NIER researchers take part actively. Among the reasons for this new one are the combat of discrimination of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, and the increase of their inclusion in labour market. One of the major objectives of the strategy is the growth of the share of disabled people placed in employment (from the ones registered as unemployed) from 35.0% in 2017 to 39.0% in 2021 (it was 34.0% in 2015) [19, pp. 5-34].

NIER not only participates in elaborating strategies and policies, but shows a good example in employment of disabled people. In the institute 6 persons with disabilities work: 2 scientific researchers, 3 people in the Republican Technical-Scientific Library (inside NIER) and 1 person from auxiliary personnel.

Conclusions and recommendations

The people with disabilities from the Republic of Moldova are in a more difficult situation than non-disabled persons in the labour market. Even though the state authorities are actively involved in helping disabled persons to be employed, there are many problems that have a multidimensional character (like many vulnerable groups they face multidimensional deprivation):

- Discrimination, more pronounced against the mentally disabled persons, including in the workplace;
- Lack or insufficient facilities, information, trained persons for people with disabilities (access ramps; adapted doors, elevators, transport, interpreters etc.);
- Deficient understanding of disabled people's needs that results in their social exclusion;
- Weak motivation from the people with disabilities to be employed, because of dependence on social allowance, even though it doesn't cover their basic needs and, as a result, puts them in poverty;
- Poor motivation from the employers to hire and keep them in a job, considering investments in these people irrecoverable and the state not involved enough in helping them;

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- Predominance of medical model of disability, thus a bigger emphasis on social protection and less - on empowerment of the rights of persons with disabilities, including in employment;

- Lack of comprehensive statistical data for employment of people with disabilities, the existing data focus only on the ones registered in employment agencies and that comprises a small proportion of them.

To improve the conditions of employment for people with disabilities we consider the following recommendations opportune:

1) Using carefully the quotas in employing persons with disabilities to not increase the already existing discrimination in the workplace (ex.: as was mentioned in *Fuchs (2014)* [15, pp. 6-7]). For example, to differentiate quotas by the size of the company – a higher quota - in a large enterprise and a smaller quota - in a small company. The rationale behind this is based on the study of *Fraser et al (2011)* [14, p.3] and it refers to large businesses being more capable to support the costs of jobs for disabled people than small enterprises who could be more motivated intrinsically to create jobs, hire and keep these people in these jobs. Subsequent studies are needed to determine the companies' costs and how and to what extent the enterprises themselves, the state authorities, NGOs and other actors need to contribute, especially financially and to find the suitable quotas.

2) Fostering inclusion in labour market by gradual deinstitutionalization of disabled people from sheltered workshops to supported employment. As is shown in *Cimera (2008)* [9, p.19] sheltered workshops are costlier in long-term than supported employment. In *Antonov, Gavriliță and Gamanji (2010)* [2, p.37] is pointed out that limited access to education for people with disabilities creates social and economic inequalities, therefore inclusion policies should take in consideration not only the labour market, but a better access to education, too.

3) Creating mixed groups in workplace that would combine people with disabilities and people without disabilities, empowering their teamwork, because segregation policies preserve isolation and increases social exclusion, including exclusion from labour market.

4) Promoting individual entrepreneurship between people with disabilities. The successful stories of disabled people as entrepreneurs could help the other people acknowledge them and accept them as having equal rights, thus reducing discrimination.

5) focusing on finding jobs that have a high demand and low supply of qualified workers and preparing the people with disabilities for them, as was mentioned in *Fong et al. (2010)* [8, p. 408].

6) Moving from a supply-side employment model to a mixed one, that comprises the demand-side employment component, too (as was implied in *Wehman (2012)*) [29, pp.139-140].

7) Offering incentives for employers that employ disabled people, as is stated in *Shima, Zólyomi and Zaidi (2008)* [26, pp.14-15], like in:

a) Czech Republic, where for creating jobs for this group of people an one-time payment is given to the company and other payments for operational expenses together with tax facilities;

b) Slovenia, where tax advantages are given in case if the enterprises offer work for disabled people with a salary of 50-70% from the salary of the disabled persons, but not bigger than the taxable base;

c) Finland, in which employers can obtain subsidies for the employees being in the group of risk that may lose their job due to the decreasing work ability (by 40%) and earning capacity in the next 5 years;

d) United Kingdom, which offers an allowance for the employment of disabled people and for their support, replacing the facilities for income and incapability;

e) Other EU countries, where facilities are given by authorities to accommodate the infrastructure of the workplace.

8) changing the term “*persons with disabilities*” with “*persons with specific needs*” as is suggested by Pavlencu in her PhD thesis [17, p.84] and in *Cârnaț, Pavlencu and Costișanu (2016)* [7, p.14], because in this way the focus from person’s imperfections is shifted to the individual traits of the person. We consider that we need to be careful in changing too often the term that refers to the people with disabilities, because on one side this change is meant to divert people’s attention from imperfections of a person with disability to reduce discrimination, but on the other side each new generalization that comes with a newer and a more politically correct term can create difficulties in targeting the vulnerable group.

Of course, these represent only a tiny part of the difficulties that people with disabilities face in their everyday lives, that in practice are much more complex and hardly understood not only by the general population, state authorities and employers, but even by experts in the field. Even the definition of disability is not nailed down and will have changes when new findings arise. In the light of these statements, we should see the improvement of disabled people’s conditions, including those related to employment as a work in progress with it’s own good parts and it’s imperfections, after all Moldova is a developing country and the needs of people with disabilities, sadly, but have a lesser priority. That being said, we believe that an improvement in the quality of education of general population will gradually bring a paradigm change in the collective mentality for acknowledging the capabilities of people with disabilities that were denied, but only together with policies that will foster their social inclusion in all spheres of life, including employment.

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