



Training Employability Accessibility Framework

Intellectual Output N.1



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Drafted with the contribution of:

- *I.Ri.Fo.R. Regionale Toscana ONLUS - IRIFOR, Florence (IT)*
- *Centro Machiavelli S.r.l. - CM, Florence (IT)*
- *Polish Association of Blind (Polski Związek Niewidomych)- PZN, Warszawa (PL)*
- *Stichting Bartiméus Sonneheerdt – BARTIMEUS, Doorn (NL)*
- *UNIVERSITAT LINZ - JKU, Linz (AT)*

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RADAR

European Commission, Erasmus+
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RADAR - Vocational Guidance and Employability for Blind and
Partially Sighted People

TEAF

Training-Employability-Accessibility Framework

Project Information

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TEAF

Training-Employability-Accessibility Framework

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Authors	Aashish Kumar Verma, Klaus Miesenberger, Andrea Petz, Anna Lemanczyk, Diane Massaar, Annelies Lichtenberg, Antonio Quatraro, Giulia Moretti, Mario Paiano
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Structure of this activity

Aim and goal of RADAR

RADAR attempts to resolve the complex problems relevant to the blind and the VIP (visually impaired people) unemployment level in the European Union. Additionally, this project aims at overcoming the shortage of information on different possibilities offered by the labor market for them, in particular related to the fast changes on the labor market due to the ongoing digitization in all domains of work. Traditional jobs no longer exist, new domains ask for accessibility, training and education and new approaches in services for vocational inclusion. This demands for new approaches for enhancing knowledge of existing training opportunities linked to accessibility programs in use and new areas of employment. Examples of viable practice should be exchanged and adapted to the local situation. The concept of getting more information regarding employment is important for blind and VIP to make their personal path of career growth and professional development.

There are different issues regarding employment of blind and VIP in EU countries. These job seeker's traditional professions such as a telephone operator are slowly disappearing in the EU because of technological advancement and rapid socio-economic changes. Therefore, a greater / wider knowledge of the opportunities offered by the most recent ICTs is needed. Generally, blind and VIP faced difficulties in access to resources and support in self-employment when compared with their employed colleagues, especially with regard to personal assistance as well as other kind of support. This project aims to solve this complex problem regarding employability of blind and VIP.

The unemployment rates of blind and visually impaired people in the European Union are currently ¹ high. However, there is relevant progress made in recent years by the EU legislative systems ² for inclusion of blind and VIP impacting on the situation in the different countries. Additionally, there are new professional opportunities available for this group due to advanced assistive ICTs.

This high unemployment rate may be due to following reasons:

- There are different definitions of “blindness” and “visual impairment” in the different countries of European Union ³.
- There are various kinds of employment, legislative/administrative systems ⁴ and economic situations, as well as different level of social security programs in the EU countries. These points make hard for a worker with disability ⁵ to compete easily in the EU labor market.
- Blind and VIP workers are registered for a significantly longer time in employment exchange services lists as compared to other workers.

¹ Statistics about Blindness and Partial Sight in Europe, online May 2020: <http://www.euroblind.org/about-blindness-and-partial-sight/facts-and-figures>.

² Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion: European accessibility act, online May 2020: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1202>.

³ Linda, N., Maia, M., Hennen, L., Wolbring, G., Bratan, T., Kukk, P., Cas, J., Capari, L., Krieger-Lamina, J., Mordini, E.: Assistive technologies for people with disabilities - Part II: Current and emerging technologies. 10.2861/567013 (2018)

⁴ Arranz, D., Badea, P., Caspar, S., Filauro, S., Grzegorzewska, M., György, E., Jaksic, E., Piroli, G., Pisiotis, A., Rieff, J., Roelen, E., Rosini, S., Thirion, G., and Rie, T., Pisiotis A.: Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2018, doi:10.2767/515097 (2018)

⁵ Halvorsen, R., Hvinden, B., Bickenbach, J., Ferri, D., Rodriguez, A.: The Changing Disability Policy System: Active Citizenship and Disability in Europe Volume 1, Routledge, New York, 2017

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- Employment related information is not equally widespread among EU countries. Additionally, there is less information available on latest profession or training resources for blind and VIP⁶. The development of education and training programs for new and developing job domains is lagging considerably behind.

This project acts directly on Employers and Operators who are responsible for employment and job application services for blind and VIP (e.g. mentors, career guidance professionals, etc.), both in public or private offices for VET (Vocational Education and Training) inclusion policies and work.

This project appears to offer standard actions and intellectual outputs. These outputs aimed to:

- Raise employer’s awareness and understanding of VIP employability problems, explain job tasks and professional positions that could be performed by them, and provide information on the standards/technological criteria required to improve their working conditions.
- Improve the quality of work-placement & VET guidance services for partially sighted and blind job seekers, and improve the sectoral skills of their associated operators. Due to the ongoing digitization in all domains and continuous development / diffusion of ICTs for accessibility and support, they will acquire more in-depth information about new learning opportunities and developing careers coverable by VIP too.
- Enhance the skills of tutors, teachers, support teachers, trainers, and educators to manage VIP’s specific training & working needs.
- Focus on a package of the peculiar skills for educators, trainers, labor service operators, employers, guidance professionals and employers that could be a reference to prepare them to deal effectively with the needs of the blind and VIP.

Aim and Goal of this deliverable

The TEAF is a general comparison framework of the VIP work placement and social inclusion procedures, describing – per each involved country - weaknesses, strengths and development lines of accessibility and VET Services through a detailed study of the peculiar needs of Employers and Labor services Operators and analyzing the more requested professional profiles (or competences) by firms, coverable also by blind and VI job-seekers, thanks to the last assistive ICTs.

Within the TEAF partners intend to:

- Collect and systematize the general data regarding different approaches and best practices in use in their countries for the work-placement of blind and VI and compare the different job-application dynamics aimed to them, focusing the specific aptitudes shown by entrepreneurial actors in hiring;
- Deepen, detail and update (if necessary) the needs, already identified during the proposal drafting, of the two main project target groups and due to few, fragmentary and not widespread information about new professional or training opportunities for VIP and to the most advanced assistive ICTs to equip an accessible work-place. The lacking or not complete specific knowledge and expertise of Employers and Labor Services Operators will be more highlighted, providing further info for the tailored contents to be developed within the other two I.Os;
- Compare the new professional profiles currently covered (or potentially coverable) by blind and VI job-seekers thanks to the most recent assistive devices, taking in account those already recognized at EU level. It will allow to focus the most requested by firms, evaluate if they are present in all

⁶ International Council for Education and Rehabilitation of People with Visual Impairment, online May 2020: <http://www.icevi-europe.org/>.

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partner countries and if locally there are further that could be shared and transferred, and to analyze in detail the specific new competences linked to ICTs applying for work;

- Make a general recognition of the last assistive technologies used today in several working activities by VIP, comparing those already in use in partner countries and those with limited diffusion or still at the beginning, to promote their circulation, access and use among the involved countries.

So TEAF is structured in several thematic sections such as:

1. Comparison of the main features of Work and Social Inclusion Systems in partner countries and general overview on the different approaches to VIP work-placement and related employability potential
2. Analysis of the employers' knowledge on the current working potential of VIP due to the last ICTs and of the meanings, expectations, needs and possible problems seen in hiring them (It will verify also if and how the prejudices toward the work of disabled people are still present in the Labor Market, with the aim of debunking or resizing them)
3. Analysis of the VET and Work Services for disadvantaged groups, deepening the specific needs of their operators to better manage the working and training necessities of blind or VI job-seekers or detecting new possible ones.
4. Compared focus on the more requested professional profiles or tasks coverable also by blind and VIP and on the new emerging professions today available using the most advanced assistive devices;
5. Compendium of the last hardware and software assistive technologies used today in several working activities by VIP.

Partners / Countries Involved

The Consortium ensures a transnational teamwork and exchange of proper knowledge, scientific and technical expertise and experience strictly linked with the project's goals. It consists of 4 institutions and organizations for blind and partially sighted people and 1 Training Center (CM) which implemented several EU projects for peculiar learning pathways addressed to visually impaired people. In fact, CM has been involved by the Applicant with the aim to support the whole Consortium in the implementation of the materials, due to its significant former experience in this field. Additionally, CM is a training center certified UNI EN ISO 9001:2015 and UNI ISO 29990:2011 and it can put at disposal of the Consortium its own quality management expertise and tools, in order to facilitate the whole project's assessment process.

IRiFoR has accepted for the first time the challenge to be Applicant of an EU Strategic Partnership project, believing that the useful past experiences gained in this field, allowed to achieve the capacities to face this commitment. Furthermore, Mr. Antonio Quatraro, President of IRiFoR since 2015, has been UICI's President for many years during which he coordinated, as Project Manager, all the EU projects carried out by the Union of Blind, ensuring continuity of competences and mission. Therefore, IRiFoR decided to select some partners among those already involved by its main associated partner UICI in former projects as guarantee of an effective professional synergy, strengthening its own local and transnational networks. For example, the Dutch partner was involved both in VET4VIP and MoLLVIS projects (see previous section). The other partners were selected among EU organizations and institutions which share with the Applicant mission, objectives and interests linked to the social inclusion policies for visually impaired people. The Dutch partner, BARTIMEUS, indeed, is a national professional organisation for education, services and care for visually impaired people in the Netherlands. The education is divided in special primary, secondary and vocational education under

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the Ministry over Education, Culture and Sciences, the care and services are under the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

The Polish Association of the Blind (Polski Związek Niewidomych - PZN), whereas, is an NGO structured as a network including for each Polish region chapters of PZN and local units. The Association has been helping visually impaired persons in the rehabilitation field and in the vocational field, carrying out various projects aimed to support blind persons to enter the job market. Finally, the Institute Integriert Studierent at Johannes Kepler Univeritat was founded in 1991 as “Endeavour Computer Science for the Blind “and, after a successful starting phase, it was installed permanently and became the Institute Integriert Studieren at JKU. Now the Institute supports 100+ students with all forms of disabilities and all available study courses. The Austrian partner is specialized in technological research for assistive ICTs and provides orientations in Assistive technologies for blind and partially sighted people. Indeed, it was involved in more than 70 (inter)national and EU research projects mainly focused on Accessibility. As academic Dept., it also teaches Accessibility (in terms of web accessibility as well as for information and document accessibility up to accessibility of maths, statistics and science) and Design for All / Universal Design for Web and Software Design and carries out Activities comprise (but are not limited to) Orientation and counselling, preparation of study materials, adaptation of exam conditions, development of (inter)personal and communication skills as well as preparation for Labor Market entry and internships.

Within our society visual input is predominant. Therefore, all blind and partially sighted people are considered handicapped – a handicap set by a majority that defined the visual channel as the standard. This Consortium would try to give a contribution to the change of this limited concept, which has a strong impact also on the Labor Market, by enhancing all the other capabilities that VIP could use effectively in working contexts. This way the approach desired by partners as project’s main pillar is to create an inclusive and sustainable working environment for both blind and partially sighted people in a society that is willing to include all its members with all their abilities. The preparation phase of the hereby application proved that the consortium is capable of team work, consensus achievements and obtaining common results.

Partners working in this activity are:

- JKU Linz (Leading the activities) / Austria
- PZN Warszawa / Poland
- BARTIMEUS Doorn / Netherlands
- IRIFOR Florence / Italy
- CM Florence / Italy

Activities

WHO	WHAT
JKU	Developing and sharing with IRIFOR the FIRST DRAFT of researching templates and the related survey instructions (e.g. interview templates for key witness, for Focus Groups aimed to Employers and Labor Services Operators, for technicians for assistive ICTs and programmers of Apps & accessibility features)
JKU + IRIFOR	Refinement and sharing with all partners of the FINAL VALIDATED VERSION of all the researching templates
ALL PARTNERS	Survey activities in each partner country:

Under JKU supervision	<p>1. UPDATED DOCUMENTARY COLLECTION of legal contributions, recent researches and statistical new data (if any) and other official sources on the focused topics) to have a general overview on different approaches and best practices in use for blind and VIP work-placement</p> <p>2. Realization of: FOCUS GROUP with selected sample group of Employers to deepen their peculiar needs on VIP employability and/or about possible difficulties to be faced in managing accessibility requirements in workplace; FOCUS GROUP with selected sample group of Labor Services Operators dealing with blind or VI workers/job seekers to deepen their peculiar needs on VIP employability and about specific guidance necessities and daily strategies applied to meet them.</p> <p>3. Realization of: OPEN INTERVIEWS TO KEY-WITNESS as: Resp./Head of local or national organizations/associations for blind and VIP; employers and entrepreneurial actors about the professional profiles currently covered (or potentially coverable) by VIP (the most representative per each partner country) ANALYSIS OF CURRENT REGIONAL OR NATIONAL LISTS OF WORKING OPEN POSITIONS, focusing those that could be covered by blind and VIP; IDENTIFICATION OF the most used last assistive ICT for VIP work-placement</p>
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Austria Desktop Research: Summary

Statistics

Can you point us to statistical data, studies and resources (Title / name, short description and eventually URL) concerning...

1. Describe the target group by demographic categories of blind and VIP (Visually Impaired people) in your country (Age, Gender, disability, highest finished formal education, in school / in job / job seeker / retired, living on their own or with parents / in institution, gets subsidy...).
2. Write down the statistics regarding blind and VIP education in your region.
3. Analyse the employment status statistics of blind and VIP in your area. (absolute / relative numbers, cross tabs, data from control groups – e.g. same age / education)

Austria Statistics

- <https://www.blindenverband.at/de/information/augengesundheit/97/Statistische-Daten> the Blinden und Sehbehinderteneband Österreich [Austrian Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired] mentions a statistic from the Mikrozensus [Census of Population] 2007. According to this statistics,
 - 3.9 percent of the population, i.e., about 318000 people, said to have problems with sight.
 - More precisely, 3000 people were blind,
 - 101000 had a severe,
 - 146000 a medium, and
 - 68000 had a moderate visual impairment.
- As per Europe Blind Organisation:
 - Children and Young person with 18 year of age and less than it : 35000 but there are no current statistics available.
 - Approx. 2 %, The percentage compared with non-disabled children and young persons.
 - In 2009 there were 1.6 million people living with disability
 - 19.9 % of this number are visually impaired
 - 2.2% are visually impaired children
- No current statistics available
- 2008 statistics available in Employment Status Statistics as per EBU report (Hidden majority in Austria):

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features	Permanently disabled people ¹⁾									
	A total of	Men	Women	Men			Women			
				Age in completed years						
				under 20	20 to under 60	60 and more	under 20	20 to under 60	60 and more	
in 1.000	in % age of population in private households									
A total of	1.687	20,5	20,2	20,8	6,2	16,3	48,3	4,5	14,7	48,5
Vision Problems ²⁾	318	3,9	3,4	4,3	1,1	2,2	9,7	1,2	2,1	11,9
How severe your problem with see										
mild	68	0,8	0,9	0,7	.	1,0	1,7	(0,7)	0,5	1,3
medium	146	1,8	1,5	2,1	(0,4)	0,7	5,0	(0,4)	1,1	5,7
Severe	101	1,2	1,0	1,4	0,7	0,5	2,9	(0,2)	0,5	4,6
Respondent is blind	(3)	.	.	(0,1)	(0,3)

1) STATISTIK AUSTRIA, 4th quarter 2007 microcensus - additional questions "People with disabilities". - Population: people in private households. - Extrapolated figures. - Sampling errors and confidence intervals under section Methodological notes. - () With an extrapolated number of people of 6,000 or less, there is a sample error of 50% or more.

2) Permanently handicapped people are people who answer "Yes" to the question "Are you restricted in everyday life due to a health impairment?" And to the question "Have you had this impairment for more than six months?" answered "Yes" or "Don't know".

3) Question wording "Are you dealing with... problems with vision (despite glasses, contact lenses or other visual aids)?"

Table A: This table is based upon:

https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_mensen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf

Latest Data

As per document: People with disabilities: Results of the microcensus additional questions 4th quarter 2015, Statistics Austria, 2016

http://statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche_beeintraechtigungen/index.html

- Severity of problems with vision:
 - 216,000 people have vision problems (3.0% of the population aged 15 and over). In the 2015 additional microcensus survey, 53,000 people (0.7%) reported serious problems. Around 2,200 people (0.03%) described themselves as blind.)
 - The estimate of the number of severely visually impaired or blind people in Austria:
 - Based on the DESTATIS survey, 37,100 people or 0.5% of the Austrian population were found. Population aged 15 and over in the category of "blindness and visual impairment" (degree of Disability from 50%), including 7,700 people (0.1%) with blindness or loss of both Eyes and 5,100 people (0.1%) with severe visual impairment.
 - According to the 2014 Health Survey on Difficulty Seeing Even When One Glasses or contact lenses were worn, 1.1% of the population had large difficulties (80,000 people), another 0.2% said they were blind or almost blind (14,000 people).

features	Permanently disabled people ¹⁾									
	A total of	Women	Men	Wonen			Men			
				Age in completed years						
				15 to under 20	20 to under 60	60 and more	15 to under 20	20 to under 60	60 and more	
in 1.000	in % age of population in private households									
Vision Problems ²⁾	216,3	3,0	3,3	2,6	-	1,8	7,3	.	1,5	6,1
How severe your problem with see										
mild	75,7	1,0	0,9	1,2	.	0,5	1,9	-	0,8	2,5
medium	85,4	1,2	1,6	0,7	-	0,8	3,7	.	0,3	2,1
Severe	53,0	0,7	0,8	0,7	-	0,5	1,7	-	0,4	1,5
Respondent is blind	(2,2)	(0,0)	(0,0)	(0,0)	.	(0,0)	(0,0)	.	(0,1)	.

Source: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, microcensus 4th quarter 2015 - additional questions "People with disabilities". - Population: people aged 15 and over in private households. - Extrapolated figures. - Sampling errors and confidence intervals under section Methodological notes.
- () With an extrapolated number of people of 6,000 or less, there is a sampling error of 32% or more.
1) Permanently handicapped people are people who answer "Yes" to the question "Are you restricted in everyday life due to a health impairment?" And to the question "Have you had this impairment for more than six months?" answered "Yes" or "Don't know".
2) Question wording "Are you dealing with ... problems with vision (despite glasses, contact lenses or other visual aids)?"

Table B: This table is based upon microcensus additional questions 4th quarter 2015, Statistics Austria

Stakeholders

4. Mention the different governmental institutions working for blind and VIP in your region and their main focus (education, care, labour market integration) – if any.

- Sozialministeriumservice (Service run by the Ministry for Social Affairs): <https://www.sozialministeriumservice.at/>
- Responsible for financial support of people with disabilities. For blind and visually impaired people, the support of the Sozialministeriumservice in order to get technical aids at work is of special importance.

5. Write down the various Educators in your country that work for blind and VIP, and analyse if they deal with blind and VIP ONLY or if they ALSO work for our target group – if any.

- The most important school for the blind and visually impaired in Austria is the Bundes-Bildungsinstitut - Schwerpunkt Sehen [Federal Educational Institute Mainly Concerned with Vision]: <http://www.bbi.at>
- Besides offering basic education, up to secondary level and some kind of vocational education, the school is committed to the support of blind and VI pupils, and their teachers, in mainstream education.
- Similar work is done by the Kompetenzzentrum für Hör- und Sehbildung: Caritas Linz [Competence Centre for auditory and visual education: Caritas Linz]: <https://www.caritas-linz.at/hilfe-angebote/menschen-mit-behinderungen/kompetenzzentrum-fuer-hoer-und-sehbildung/>

6. Are there any traditional employers for blind and VIP on the labour market?

Visually impaired workers can be found in a wide range of occupations. They work in all kinds of offices, do manual labor, work as massage therapists, teachers, journalists or in NGOs.

7. Could you analyse and describe their role and potential?

See answer 12

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8. What are the different End User Organisations for blind and VIP that are active in your country?

- The most important end user organization for blind and visually impaired people in Austria is the Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband Österreich [Austrian Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired]: <https://www.blindenverband.at/>
- It is run completely by blind and visually impaired people, with the main objective of representing their own interests – economical, cultural, societal etc. – within mainstream society.
- Similar work is done by the Hilfgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs [Support Community of the Blind and Visually Impaired in Austria]: <https://www.hilfgemeinschaft.at/>

9. What is their scope and are you aware of any context they assist our target group / our project outcomes?

10. Mention about various Labour market service providers for blind and VIP at your region – if any and analyse their experience (how long are they working, how many clients, success factors from publications).

- The most important organization here is again the Sozialministeriumservice mentioned under a. – it supports blind and partially sighted individuals in their integration into the labour market, and it also supports their employers by granting them financial benefits when they employ a person with a disability.

11. What are your views on blind and VIP in your country?

As per STATISTIK AUSTRIA, there is improvement in % age of permanent vision disabilities.

The people with permanent vision problems decrease to 3.0 % from 4.3%. (More specifically Men decrease to 2.6% from 3.6% and Women decrease to 3.3% from 4.8%)

Permanent impairments from the age of 15 in 2007 and 2015 by gender

features	Proportion of people with permanent disabilities in%					
	A total of		Men		Women	
	2007	2015	2007	2015	2007	2015
Permanent impairments overall	23,3	18,4	22,9	17,9	23,6	18,8
Problems with mobility / mobility	15,3	14,1	14,0	13,2	16,4	14,9
Multiple impairment	8,1	7,3	7,4	6,6	8,9	7,9
Problems from other impairments	7,8	5,1	8,6	3,0	7,0	4,4
Vision problems	4,3	3,0	3,8	2,6	4,8	3,3
Nervous or psychological problems	2,9	3,7	2,4	3,0	3,3	4,4
Hearing problems	2,8	2,1	2,6	2,4	3,1	1,9
Mental problems or learning problems	1,0	0,8	1,1	0,9	1,0	0,8
Problems speaking	0,8	0,4	0,9	0,4	0,8	0,3

Table C: Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, 4th quarter microcensus, 2007 and 2015 - additional questions "People with disabilities". Created on 01/20/2017.

12. Mention other stakeholders for blind, VIP and in disability general.

No.	Name	Contact/ Website	Description/Role
1	Hilfsgemeinschaft	https://www.hilfsgemeinschaft.at	The Aid Community of the Blind and Visually Impaired Austria has been actively helping blind and visually impaired people in Austria for over 80 years.
2	BBRZ – (Berufliches Bildungs- und Rehabilitationszentrum)	https://www.bbrz.at	The BBRZ - Vocational Education and Rehabilitation Center - accompanies people back to work after an accident or illness.
3	BSVÖ (Blinden Und Sehbehindertenverband Österreich)	https://www.blindenverband.at	The BSVÖ is a non-profit association with no ties to any party or denomination. The efforts and undertakings of the BSVÖ are determined by the guiding principle of helping people to help themselves and thereby helping blind people and people with visual impairments to lead a self-determined life.
4.	uniability	https://www.uniability.org/	For the equality of people with disabilities and chronic diseases at Austrian universities
5.	Behindertenombudsmann	https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/leben_in_oesterreich/ombudsstellen_und_anwaltschaften/Site.3240003.html	The disability ombudsman provides advice to people with disabilities and their relatives.
6.	www.netdoktor.at	https://www.netdoktor.at/selbsthilfegruppen/sehbehinderung-240550	Website available to search for information related to health

Austria Region: Vorarlberg

7.	Sehbehinderung - Vorarlberger Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband - Schwarzach - Vorarlberg	http://www.vbsv.at/ Address: Ingrüne 12 6858 Schwarzach Vorarlberg Phone: 05572/582 21 E-mail: recovery center@vbsv.at Fax: 05572/582 21 - 33 Homepage: http://www.vbsv.at/	Visually impaired - Vorarlberg Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired - Schwarzach - Vorarlberg
8.	Sehbehinderung - Elternselbsthilfe für	Address: Walter Thöni Eichenweg 4 6713 Ludesch	Visual impairment - Parents self-help for visually
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	sehgeschädigte Kinder - Ludesch - Vorarlberg	Vorarlberg Phone: 0664 342 15 72 E-mail: walter.thoeni@thoenibau.at Homepage: http://www.esh.at Description: Vorarlberg	impaired children - Ludesch - Vorarlberg
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Austria State: Tirol

9.	Sehbehinderung - Tiroler Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband - Innsbruck - Tirol	Adresse: Amraserstrasse 87 6020 Innsbruck Tirol Telefon: 0512/334 22 - 0 E-Mail: office@tbsv.org Fax: 0512/334 22 - 85 Homepage: http://www.tbsv.org/	Visually impaired - Tyrolean Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired - Innsbruck - Tyrol
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Austria State: Salzburg

10.	Sehbehinderung - Salzburger Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband - Salzburg - Salzburg	Adresse: Schmiedingerstraße 62 5020 Salzburg Salzburg Telefon: 0662/43 16 63 - 0 E-Mail: sekretariat@sbsv.at Fax: 0662/43 16 63 - 12 Homepage: http://www.sbsv.at/	Visually impaired - Salzburg Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired - Salzburg - Salzburg
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Austria State: Kärnten

11.	Sehbehinderung - Kärntner Blinden- und Schwerstsehbehindertenverband - Klagenfurt - Kärnten	Address: Gutenbergstrasse 7 9020 Klagenfurt Carinthia Phone: 0463/558 22 Fax: 0463/50 20 26 Homepage: http://www.blindenverband-ktn.at/	Visual impairment - Carinthian Association for the Blind and Severely Visually Impaired - Klagenfurt
12.	Sehbehinderung - Elternselbsthilfe sehgeschädigter Kinder Kärnten - Wöfnitz - Kärnten	Address: Am Weitblick 14 9061 Wöfnitz Carinthia Phone: 0664/332 62 43 E-mail: renate.resenig@wkk.or.at Homepage: http://www.esh.at	Visual impairment - Parents self-help for visually impaired children Carinthia - Wöfnitz - Carinthia

Austria State: Styria

14.	Sehbehinderung - Elternselbsthilfe für sehgeschädigte Kinder Steiermark - Hausmannstätten - Steiermark	Address: Vasoldsberg 4 8071 Hausmannstätten Styria Phone: 03135/478 73 E-mail: gerti.kli@inode.at Homepage: http://www.esh.at	Visual impairment - Parents self-help for visually impaired children Styria - Hausmannstätten - Styria
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15.	Sehbehinderung - Steiermärkischer Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband (stBSV) - Graz - Steiermark	Address: Augasse 132 8051 Graz Styria Phone: 0316/68 22 40 E-mail: office@stbsv.info Fax: 0316/68 22 40 - 10 Homepage: http://www.stbsv.info	Visual impairment - Styrian Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired (stBSV) - Graz - Styria
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Austria State: Upper Austria

16.	Sehbehinderung - Elternselbsthilfe für sehgeschädigte Kinder Oberösterreich - Aschach an der Steyr - Oberösterreich	Address: Rustorf 61 4421 Aschach an der Steyr Upper Austria Phone: 07259/342 14, 0699/81 17 82 61 E-mail: hannes.moser@mph.ie Homepage: http://www.esh.at	Visual impairment - Parents self-help for visually impaired children Upper Austria
17.	Sehbehinderung - Oberösterreichischer Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband - Linz - Oberösterreich	Address: Makartstrasse 11 4020 Linz Upper Austria Phone: 0732/65 22 96-0 E-mail: office@blindenverband-ooe.at Fax: 0732/65 22 96 - 18 Homepage: http://www.blindenverband-ooe.at/	Visual impairment - Upper Austrian Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired - Linz
18.	Institut Integriert Studieren, JKU, Linz		<p>1. Research in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) and accessibility / disability and assistive technologies</p> <p>2. Education for computer science students (Bachelor's and Master's programs) and teaching elective courses for all JKU students in all research areas</p> <p>3. Service & Support Center for students who have disabilities and / or chronic illnesses in close cooperation with publishing companies, the JKU Rectorate as well as JKU course instructors and heads of institutes at the JKU</p>

Austria State: Lower Austria

19.	Sehbehinderung - Engel mit Herz - Niederösterreich	Address: Lower Austria Phone: 0664/942 86 20 E-mail: sabine.kleist@chello.at Description: Self-help group to promote togetherness and mobility of sighted-blind and visually impaired people Opening hours: Meetings in Ternitz or Neunkirchen alternately, online and telephone advice	Visual impairment - angels with hearts - Lower Austria
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Austria State: Vienna

20.	Sehbehinderung - Elternselbsthilfe sehgeschädigter Kinder - Wien - Wien	Address: LeystraÙe 41/1/12 1200 Vienna Phone: 0699/158 485 62 E-mail: Verein@esh.at Homepage: http://www.esh.at Description: (Federal association)	Visual impairment - Parents self-help for visually impaired children - Vienna
21	Sehbehinderung - Österreichischer Blinden- und Sehbehindertenvorband - Wien - Wien	Address: Hägelinggasse 3/2. Stock 1140 Vienna Phone: 01/982 75 84 - 201, 0664/441 04 00 Email: praesident@blindenverband.at Fax: 01/982 75 84 - 204 Homepage: http://www.oebv.at/	Visual impairment - Austrian Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired - Vienna
22	Sehbehinderung - Engel auf Pfoten - Wien - Wien	Address: Ditscheinergasse 4/6 1030 Vienna Phone: 01/890 18 50 E-mail: info@engelaufpfoten.at Fax: 01/890 18 50 - 15 Homepage: http://www.engelaufpfoten.at Description: Association to promote the mobility of visually impaired and blind people	Visual impairment - angels on paws - Vienna
23	Sehbehinderung - Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs - Wien - Wien	Address: Jägerstrasse 36 1200 Vienna Phone: 01/330 35 45 - 0 E-mail: info@hilfsgemeinschaft.at Fax: 01/330 35 45 - 11 Homepage: http://www.hilfsgemeinschaft.at	Visually impaired - Aid community for the blind and visually impaired in Austria - Vienna
24	Sehbehinderung - Elternselbsthilfe sehgeschädigter Kinder - Wien - Wien	Address: Csokorgasse 17 1110 Vienna Phone: 01/768 39 76 E-mail: irene.jagersberger@aon.at Homepage: http://www.esh.at Description: support group	Visual impairment - Parents self-help for visually impaired children - Vienna

Table D: Stakeholders for blind, VIP and in disability general

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Studies

13. Are there traditional job areas for blind and VIP in your region?

No.	Profile
1.	Telephone Operator
2.	Massage Therapist
3.	Employee on a civil law agreement
4.	Telemarketer
5.	Basket Weaving
6.	office
7.	Masseurs
8.	Blind Musicians, Singers
9.	Call center staff
10.	Telemarketers
11.	Machine Operators
12.	Experts in IT and assistive technologies for persons with disabilities

Table E: Traditional job areas for blind and VIP in your region

14. Are there emerging job areas for blind and VIP in your country?

No.	Emerging Job Profiles
1.	Coach
2.	Assistant
3.	Coders
4.	Artists
5.	Bloggers
6.	IT Specialists
7.	Bio Technologist
8.	Data Scientist
9.	Waiter in the special Restaurants
10.	IT Trainers
11.	Website Accessibility Experts
12.	Smartphone Apps Accessibility Experts
13.	Software Accessibility Experts

Table F: Emerging job areas for blind and VIP in your country

15. What are the various obstacles and barriers for employment of blind and VIP?

We have founded this study

Name	Author	Year	Link
Comprehensive Examination of Barriers to Employment Among Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired	Adele Crudden Lynn W. McBroom Amy L. Skinner J. Elton Moore	1999	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/213799741

Table G: Study based on obstacles and barriers for employment of blind and VIP

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As per our colleague 'Bernhard Stoeger' judgement, these are the main obstacles for a blind person to get employed in Austria:

- **Insufficient qualification:** Due to heavy barriers in education, very few blind and visually impaired people manage to get higher education, which becomes more and more important to be integrated into the labour market. Unfortunately, the educational career of most blind people in Austria ends at secondary level.
- **Insufficient trust of employers in the abilities of blind and visually impaired people – prejudice:** Employers simply cannot imagine that a person with a disability may be able to fulfil labour tasks to the same extent as a person without a disability. In competition with non-disabled people, this imposes a substantial disadvantage for people with disabilities in general, with visual disabilities in particular.
- **Protection against termination of work contract imposed by law:** As mentioned below, the Austrian Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz [Law on the Employment of Disabled Persons] provides for a regulation which protects a disabled employee against termination of his/her work contract. While, in theory, being an advantage for the employee, this regulation often turns out to be a disadvantage, because a prospective employer, being aware of the protective regulation, might then hesitate to employ a disabled person, in anxiety to have difficulty terminating the contract if he/she might elect to do so.

16. Find the impact analysis of employment for blind and VIP.

	The Hidden Majority in Austria	Fred Reid and Philippa Simkiss	2012	The general situation of people with disabilities in the Austrian labour market and the measures devised to support them are comprehensively reviewed by Mr. Oliver Koenig in the report entitled 'Employment of Disabled People in European countries: Austria'.
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17. Find the assistive technology usage, supply and their accessibility for blind and VIP people.

Mobile Applications for Blind and VIP

No.	Name	Description	Operating System	Cost
1	Envision AI	Multi-function App: Universal app for text recognition, object recognition, color recognition, barcode reader	iOS, Android	100€
2	Seeing AI	Multi-function App: Function similar to Envision AI. Currently only available in English.	iOS	Free
3	Aipoly Vision	Multi-function App: App for object and color recognition, as well as text recognition.	iOS, Android	5,99€ per Month
4	ViaOptaDaily	Multi-function App: Object and location recognition, banknote recognition, speaking timer, integrated	iOS, Android	Free

		magnifying glass, color recognition		
5	KNFB Reader	Text Recognition: KNFB Reader helps to recognize texts. The user can enlarge the text or have it read aloud. The app also offers its own voice output.	iOS, Android	100€
6	TextDetektiv	Text Recognition: Text Detective is used to recognize printed text. The text is scanned with the smartphone camera and then read out by voice output.	Android	Free
7	Prizmo	Text Recognition: Prizmo is designed to recognize printed text. The text is scanned with the smartphone camera and then read out by voice output.	iOS, Android	9€
8	File Scanner	Text Recognition: Fine Scanner is used to recognize printed text. The text is scanned with the smartphone camera and then read out by voice output.	iOS, Android	Free
9	Digit-Eyes	Text Recognition: Audio labels, barcode and QR code scanners	iOS, Android	Lite Version: Free, Pro Version: 10,99€
10	ShinePlus	Text Recognition: ShinePlus is a voice-controlled magnification tool. The app enlarges content and reads it out loud.	Android	Free
11	Ampel-Pilot	Navigation App: With the Ampel-Pilot app, the traffic light phase can be recognized and the street crossed even at pedestrian traffic lights without acoustic or tactile signaling devices.	iOS, Android	Free
12	BlindSquare	Navigation App: This app tells the user which streets, intersections and shops are in the immediate vicinity of the user and tells them the	iOS	30€

		direction in an easily understandable way.		
13	Blind Assistant	Navigation App: The app enables blind people to recognize obstacles such as walls, trees or people at an early stage thanks to echolocation.	Android	4,50€
14	ViaOpta Nav	Navigation App: ViaOpta Nav helps the user to run routes. The smartphone vibrates when the user is standing correctly, announces distances and reports when the destination has been reached. It also helps to determine your own location.	iOS Android	Free
15	TapTapSee	Object Recognition: TapTapSee helps to recognize objects. first, the user takes a photo with his smartphone camera. The app provides a written or oral description of this.	iOS Android	Free
16	NantMobile Geldleser	Object Recognition: The app recognizes banknotes with the help of the camera and announces the value. For users who can still read the screen, the value of the banknote is displayed in large numbers with high contrast.	iOS	9,99€
17	LookTel Recognizer	Object Recognition: Various everyday objects such as packaging, credit cards, ID cards, etc. are scanned. In order to be able to use the app fully, the most important objects must be photographed and titled once. The app then recognizes the objects when they are scanned and provides the user with the necessary information.	iOS	9,99€
18	Blind-Droid-Wallet	The app recognizes cash after it has been scanned with the smartphone's camera. An internet	Android	Free

		connection is not necessary to recognize the money.		
19	Quick Magnifier	Magnifying Glasses: Quick Magnifier serves as a magnifying glass (front and inside camera).	Android	Free
20	Lupe + Licht	Magnifying Glasses: The app uses the smartphone camera and zooms in on objects that have been held up.	iOS Android	Free
21	Seeing Assistant Magnifier	Magnifying Glasses: The app not only lets you enlarge the image, but also changes the brightness, contrast and hue. The additional lighting with device diodes can be switched on and off by shaking the device.	iOS	Free
22	ColorSay	Color Recognition: The user's surroundings can be scanned and the colors converted into spoken words or sounds.	iOS	4,99€
23	ColorFast	Color Recognition: Recognizes colors and outputs them via voice output.	iOS	4,99€
24	deFarbenblinde	Color Recognition: Helps color-blind people distinguish colors.	iOS	1,09€
25	ColorGrab	Color Recognition: Color recognition with the smartphone camera and subsequent voice output (by pressing the volume button)	Android	free
26	Be my Eyes	A visually impaired user has a problem and passes it on to the community via video call. A volunteer is then connected to the person via the app in order to respond directly to the problem and thus to fix the problem quickly and easily.	iOS Android	free
27	Greta	This app provides audio descriptions for Movies and DVDs.	iOS Android	free
28	MBraille	With this app, the user receives a mobile braille keyboard.	iOS	free
29	BigBrowser – by Braille Insitute	BigBrowser serves as a browser that is specially	iOS	free

		adapted to the needs of visually impaired users.		
30	Viskey	Viskey is an alternative smartphone keyboard for visually impaired IOS users. It offers larger letters and eye-catching color adjustments.	iOS	free
31	MD_evReader	The MD_evReader displays eBooks in the form of a news feed.	iOS Android	Free
32	Kuubus	Kuubus connects users to the Facebook page of the same name and provides visually impaired and blind people with messages that concern them. There is also a search function that can be used to search for audio films, audio books, etc.	iOS Android	Free

Table H: Mobile Applications for Blind and VIP

18. Find Job Satisfaction level of blind & VIP, their co-workers and their employers.

	The Hidden Majority in Austria	Fred Reid and Philippa Simkiss	2012	The general situation of people with disabilities in the Austrian labour market and the measures devised to support them are comprehensively reviewed by Mr. Oliver Koenig in the report entitled 'Employment of Disabled People in European countries: Austria'.
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19. Mention other studies of blind and VIP available in your country.

	Name	Author	Published Year	Short Description
1.	Perceptions on Health Benefits of Guide Dog Ownership in an Austrian Population of Blind People with and without a Guide Dog	Lisa Maria Glenk, Lucie P̣ribylová, Birgit Ursula Stetina, Sami Demirel, KarlWeissenbacher	7 July 2019	Health Benefits of Guide Dog Ownership in an Austrian Population of Blind People with and without a Guide Dog
2	Bachelor Thesis: Autonomous mobility for people with a Visual impairment	Developed by: Croft Tamara and Ruffiner Denise Start of studies: BAC17 / specialization in social education and social work	14 June 2020	The role of social institutions and organizations in the accompaniment and Assisting people with a visual impairment in using public transport routes.

		Accompanying lecturer: Mattig Astrid		Illustrated using the example of Upper Valais and the city of Bern.
3.	SUPPORT GROUP TO NATIONAL DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2012-2020: Statistics (BEGLEITGRUPPE ZUM NATIONALEN AKTIONSPLAN BEHINDERUNG 2012-2020)	BASMK:Report	April 19, 2013	During the constituent meeting of the advisory group for the National Action Plan on Disability on October 23, 2012, the members expressed the wish to compile existing statistical data on people with disabilities.
4.	The cultural heritage experience of visually impaired tourists: An Insight beyond sight https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283791528	Kim Boes	April 2014	This thesis reports the findings of a qualitative study, which investigated the cultural heritage experience of visually impaired people. The study explored the juxtaposing and coinciding nature of heritage and accessible tourism in pursuance of ensuring “tourism for all” in cultural heritage sites.
5.	Poverty and opportunities for inclusion in Austria Indicators for the monitoring of the national strategic plan 2008-11 (Poverty and opportunities for inclusion in Austria Indicators for the monitoring of the national strategic plan 2008-11)	Statistik Austria	Oktober 2009	Indicators for social inclusion in Austria and the European Union The member states of the European Union have common social policy goals. In order to the achievement of these goals is objectively measurable, the European institutions have the Regular observation based on statistical indicators decided.
6.	Settings of the Salzburg accommodation providers to barrier-free tourism (Einstellungen der Salzburger Beherberger zum barrierefreien Tourismus)	Dr. Markus Lassnig e-Motion - ICT competence center for the Tourism, sports and leisure industries c / o Salzburg Research markus.lassnig@salzburgresearch.at	2008	Settings of Barrier Free tourism in Salzburg

7.	People with disabilities Results of the microcensus additional questions 4th quarter 2015 Statistics Austria, 2016	Sozial Ministerium http://statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/gesundheit/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche_beeintraechtigungen/index.html	2016	In Austria - as in many other countries - the collection of statistical data on people with disabilities is only covered to a limited extent by administrative data sources. Therefore, within the framework of the microcensus, special programs on permanent impairments or disabilities were repeatedly carried out.
8	Change the Definition of Blindness	World Health Organization		CASE FOR REVISION There are five issues that dictate the need for consideration of a revision of the current definition and categorization.
9	World report on vision	World Health Organization	2019	The World report on vision seeks to stimulate action in countries to address these challenges by proposing integrated people-centred eye care (IPEC) as an approach to health system strengthening that builds the foundation for service delivery to address population needs.
10	A toolkit for organizing events on the World report on vision	World Health Organization	2020	The purpose of this toolkit is to support WHO regional and country offices and our partners around the world in planning effective events on the World report on vision, or on eye care more generally.
11	World report on vision Executive Summary	World Health Organization	2019	Summary on Vision
12	Awareness of recurrent education on visually impaired workers: A questionnaire survey about their working conditions and continuous learning courses.	Takahiro Miura, Yuya Otsuka, Masatsugu Sakajiri, Junji Onishi	2020	questionnaire survey about their working conditions and continuous learning courses
13	Visual Impairment and Blindness 2010	World Health Organization	2010	Global estimates of visual impairment: 2010,
14	Global Data on Visual Impairments	World Health Organization	2010	Global Data on Visual Impairments 2010

1 5	Overview of the horizontal issue of disability in Austria	Ministry of Social Affairs	April 2020	horizontal issue of disability in Austria
1 6	Comprehensive Examination of Barriers to Employment Among Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired	Adele Crudden Lynn W. McBroom Amy L. Skinner J. Elton Moore	1999	A national mail survey of 176 employed persons who are blind or have low vision found that employment barriers included attitudes of employers and the general public; transportation problems; and lack of access to print, adaptive equipment, and accommodations. Strategies to overcome barriers appear to be addressed on an individual basis, rather than from a macro or policy perspective.
1 6	NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON DISABILITY 2012 – 2020	Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection	2012	The National Action Plan describes the current situation in each special field, formulates policy objectives and contains 250 measures with corresponding timelines and responsibilities. In line with disability mainstreaming, the measures have to be applied by the individual federal ministries according to their responsibilities, because the rights of people with disabilities are human rights, and they cover all areas of life.
1 7	The Hidden Majority in Austria	Fred Reid and Philippa Simkiss	2012	The general situation of people with disabilities in the Austrian labour market and the measures devised to support them are comprehensively reviewed by Mr. Oliver Koenig in the report entitled 'Employment of Disabled People in European countries: Austria'.
1 8	THE HIDDEN MAJORITY Summary Report	Fred Reid and Philippa Simkiss	2013	A study of economic inactivity among blind and visually impaired people in Sweden, Germany, Romania, Netherlands, Poland, France and Austria
1 9	ZERO PROJECT REPORT 2013	Michael Fembek, Thomas H. Butcher, Ingrid Heindorf	2012	Survey of 23 Social Indicators on the implementation of the

		and Caroline Wallner-Mikl		UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 55 countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of 10 Social Indicators focusing on the employment of persons with disabilities in 82 countries • 40 Innovative practices that promote the employment of persons with disabilities • 11 Innovative Policies that promote the employment of persons with disabilities
20	Social policy analyzes SOCIAL REPORT	Sozial Ministerum	2017	These first ten chapters give a comprehensive overview of the areas of activity of the Ministry of Social Affairs and focus on measures and content in the 2015-2016 reporting period.
21	Federal Government report on the situation of people with disabilities in Austria 2016	sozialministerium.at	22. August 2017	The present report offers a comprehensive overview of the developments in disability policy from 2008 to 2016, in particular on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Action Plan 2012 - 2020.
22	AUSTRIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (Alternative report)	CRPD Austria	Vienna , January 2013	The report reflects substantial deficits and challenges in terms of the implementation of the CRPD by Austria and contains key recommendations.
23	UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD) Articles with respect to Blind and Partially sighted people in Austria	European Blind Union http://www.euroblind.org/convention		Article 7, Article 9, Article 11, Article 12, Article 13, Article 16, Article 20, Article 21, Article 24, Article 25, Article 26, Article 27, Article 28, Article 29, Article 30, Article 33

Table I: other studies of blind and VIP available in your country

Support Schemes

20. Describe the AT provision schemes available in your country.

- The extent to which AT is funded for blind or visually impaired people in Austria depends on their status in society: People at work will normally get funding for the AT they need by the Sozialministeriumservice mentioned above. However, the Sozialministeriumservice is not obliged to grant a funding – it will grant funding based on their estimation.
- People from the target group who are not at work or retired may apply for funding of AT at the government of the federal state in which they are living. Unfortunately, the funds available for this are quite limited. Pupils or students are not at all entitled to get public support for their AT – they need to collect donations, mostly from charity organizations.
- The most important company in Austria selling and supporting IT for blind and VI people is Videbis: <https://www.videbis.at/>

21. What are the various special education courses available for blind and VIP in your country?

Special education is given to blind and VIP by the two schools mentioned earlier:

- Bundes-Bildungsinstitut - Schwerpunkt Sehen
- Kompetenzzentrum für Hör- und Sehbildung: Caritas Linz
- In Austria, schools are obliged by law (Schulunterrichtsgesetz and Schulorganisationsgesetz mentioned below) to grant inclusive education to blind and VI pupils. However, this quite often does not happen because supporting teachers, with the necessary qualification to deal with the impairment, are not always available. The teachers themselves, together with the necessary counselling and expertise, are supplied by the two schools mentioned earlier:
- *Bundes-Bildungsinstitut - Schwerpunkt Sehen*
- *Kompetenzzentrum für Hör- und Sehbildung: Caritas Linz*

22. What are the various kinds of financial support schemes available for blind and VIP?

- The Republic of Austria grants to every blind or visually impaired person a financial support called Pflegegeld [Care Support]. For a legally blind person, this is approximately 500 Euro every month.

23. What are the support schemes available that benefit Employers for hiring blind and VIP in their organization?

- The most important organization here is again the Sozialministeriumservice mentioned under a. – it supports blind and partially sighted individuals in their integration into the labour market, and it also supports their employers by granting them financial benefits when they employ a person with a disability.

24. Describe best practices of support schemes for employment of blind and VIP.

- The Sozialministeriumservice mentioned above grants financial support to companies willing to employ persons with disabilities under certain conditions

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25. What are different Education and Counselling support schemes available for blind and VIP in your region?

Counselling for blind and visually impaired people in Austria is offered by these organizations already mentioned here:

- Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband Österreich
- Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs
- Sozialministeriumservice
- Educational support for blind and visually impaired pupils is offered by the two schools already mentioned here:
- Bundes-Bildungsinstitut - Schwerpunkt Sehen
- Kompetenzzentrum für Hör- und Sehbildung: Caritas Linz

26. Mention the various supported and shelter employment support schemes for blind and VIP available in your country.

Source: <http://www.euroblind.org/convention/article-27/austria>

Please see the below issues in the link above.

Measures to support Employers, Measure to support workers with disabilities, Employment of Blind and Partially sighted woman, Self Employment, Vocational rehabilitation and training, Incentive measures to employ worker with disabilities, Legal obligation to employ worker with disabilities, Vocational Counselling, Main occupation performed by workers with visual impairment, Legal recognition of disabled worker status, Trade union and worker with disabilities.

27. What are the Inclusive and Accessible Job Employment Tools available in your region for the employment of blind and VIP?

- <https://www.ams.at/arbeitsuchende>

28. What are the various work assistance services for blind and VIP available in your areas?

- <https://www.ams.at/arbeitsuchende>
- [https://www.uibk.ac.at/universitaet/welcome/downloads-englisch/001 leben und arbeiten en bfrei.pdf](https://www.uibk.ac.at/universitaet/welcome/downloads-englisch/001_leben_und_arbeiten_en_bfrei.pdf)

29. Mention the other support schemes available for blind and VIP.

Personal Assistance:

- In Austria, Personal assistance is granted to people with disabilities by the governments of the nine federal states of Austria. Unfortunately, the conditions under which assistance is granted differs from federal country to federal country, the same being true for the extent to which assistance is granted.
- formation and (Re-)Qualification schemes to prepare blind and VIP for the 1st labour market labour market inclusion support schemes
- The project ABAK - Arbeitsassistenten für AkademikerInnen mit Behinderung und/oder chronischer Erkrankung [Work Assistance for Academics with Disabilities and/or Chronical Diseases] – <http://www.abak.at> -offers to disabled people or those with chronic diseases training to position themselves on the labour market and contacts to prospective employers.
- Work assistance is offered by Verein Miteinander [Association Together]:
<https://www.miteinander.com/>

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Legislations, Policies and Administration

30. Mention the Policy maker working for blind and VIP.

- The Austrian Federal Government is policy maker for people with disability in Austria. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came into force in Austria on 26 October 2008. In order to implement this Convention, the Ministry of Social Affairs has drawn up the National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020 (NAP on Disability) in cooperation with all other federal ministries. For the first time since the Disability Concept of the Austrian government of December 1992, which in the meantime has been implemented in many fields, there is now once again a comprehensive strategy for Austrian disability policy in the form of the NAP.
- NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON DISABILITY 2012–2020, Strategy of the Austrian Federal Government for the implementation of the UN Disability Rights Convention

31. What are the various social security laws and support available for blind and VIP in your areas?

Social security is primarily governed by the Bundespflegegeldgesetz [Federal Law on Care Support]: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=1008859>

<https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/en/federal-chancellery/accessibility.html>

32. What are various laws and policies available for blind and VIP in the education sector?

- Educational affairs of pupils with disabilities, in particular, the obligation of the schools to offer inclusive education, are governed by the Schulunterrichtsgesetz [Law on Teaching at Schools] - <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009600> – and by the Schulorganisationsgesetz [Law on the Organization of Schools] - <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009265>

33. What are the different legislations, Policies and Administration for blind and VIP Employment?

- This is mainly governed by the Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz [Law on the Employment of Disabled Persons]: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10008253>
- Among other issues, the law governs the special protection of disabled persons against termination of their work contract mentioned earlier. In addition, it obliges each company to employ one person with a disability for every 50 non-disabled employees. However, the law provides for a mechanism to bypass this obligation by paying a certain fee of compensation, called Ausgleichstaxe in German. These fees are collected in a special fund, called Ausgleichstaxfonds in German, from which, as mentioned above, assistive technology for disabled people at work is funded.

34. What are the various legislations, Policies available for Anti –Discrimination of blind and VIP?

- Non-discrimination is governed by the *Bundes-Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz* [Federal Law on the Equalization of Persons with Disabilities]: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20004228>
- If somebody feels discriminated, he or she may address a complaint against the discrimination according to that law. It is, however, a substantial drawback of the law that it will not oblige

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the person or organization who caused the discrimination to remove it – rather, a financial compensation not higher than 2000 Euros will be paid to the person who brought the cause to court. There is, however, an alternative: As a pre-condition for a court procedure in a cause of discrimination, the claimant must attempt to initiate a procedure of conciliation, called *Schlichtungsverfahren* in German. Such a procedure is organized by the *Sozialministeriumservice* at no cost. The opponent is not obliged to take part in the conciliation, he or she is just invited. Should he or she not accept the invitation, or should the conciliation fail, the claimant may start a court procedure. It turned out, however, that the conciliation procedure quite often can take place, and that it often leads to a more satisfactory solution than a court procedure – there were many cases reported in which the conciliation even led to a removal of the discrimination

35. What are the different legislations and policies available to blind and VIP for accessibility?

- *Accessibility in the Federal Chancellery*
The Federal Chancellery is committed to ensuring the highest level of accessibility in its sphere of influence. This applies both to the official buildings and to the Federal Chancellery's websites.
- *Accessibility in official buildings*
Federal Chancellery buildings have undergone and are continuing to undergo various alterations and improvements to make them as accessible as possible.
Further information is available in German: Barrierefreiheit in Amtsgebäuden.
- *Rail*
Source: <http://www.euroblind.org/convention/article-9/austria>
- *Guide Dogs*
Source: <http://www.euroblind.org/convention/article-9/austria>
- *Web Accessibility*
The Federal Chancellery endeavors to ensure access to its information and services for all. All websites of the Federal Chancellery of Austria intend to achieve the Web Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 from W3C / WAI.
However, this is not always possible with the current technical means. Information on the state of the barrier-free implementation can be found in the web page Help / Accessibility.
<https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/en/federal-chancellery/accessibility.html>

36. What are the legislation and policies available for Assistive Technologies of blind and VIP?

As mentioned above, for people at work assistive technology is funded by the Sozialministeriumservice. The money comes from the Ausgleichstaxfonds [Fund of Compensation Payment] mentioned below.

37. What are the legislation and policies available for personal assistance of blind and VIP?

Personal assistance is granted by the governments of the nine federal states, which constitute Austria, having the disadvantage that the conditions under which assistance is granted and the extent of funding largely differs from one federal state to other federal country. In the federal country of Upper Austria, for example, personal assistance is governed by the *Chancengleichheitsgesetz* [Law on Equal Opportunities]:
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LROO&Gesetzesnummer=20000514>

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38. Mention other legislations, policies and administration available for blind and VIP.

Legislation to facilitate the mobility of people with disabilities:

The Austrian Disability Equality Act (BGBl. I Nr. 82/2005 (External link)) and the National Action Plan (NAP 2012-2020, July 24th, 2012) contain measures which are also referring to mobility/accessibility. Unfortunately, every region has its own regulations in the field of construction, which makes it very heterogeneous. An Austrian initiative is at the moment trying to harmonise these laws. (<http://www.euroblind.org/convention/article-20/austria>)

You can find detailed Desktop Research and Extra Studies at this link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1k2Gw_VTq-lfZ7bGcDB-eOqtixy3kijyc2?usp=sharing

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Austria Focus Group: Summary

Evaluation of the Focus Group Meeting

Methodology

A focus group discussion was held to collect information in a free exchange of ideas, suggestions and concerns about how blind and visually impaired people fare in their working environment and how they are integrated into the labor market. What obstacles and barriers are they confronted with on a daily basis and what opportunities and participation possibilities can be offered by progressive digitalization and ongoing technological achievements?

Selection of Participants

This focus group discussion consisted 5 male participants, working in the middle and upper management of public and private agencies for people with disabilities. The employment activities of the panelists range from counselling, recruitment, training to the provision of support tools in form of school materials to provide and support people with disabilities, in particular blind and visually impaired people, in their daily lives, during study and on their way into employment. The majority of participants (60%) did not have a disability. Among the 2 people with disabilities, one was blind and the other person had a mobility disability.

Introductory questions

The focus group discussion started with a short introduction describing the research project. After the presentation round, a series of questions were discussed in the plenary:

1. How do you assess the situation on the labor market for blind and partially sighted people?
2. What is the most important skill to survive on the labor market?
3. What are the main barriers and gaps for employment of blind and visual impaired people in the labor market?
4. What are the specific guidance necessities and daily strategies applied to meet possible barriers and gaps?
5. Whom do you see as the main responsible for the inclusion of blind and VIP in the labor market?
6. In your opinion, is there a minimum level of education/training that blind and VIPs should have in order to have better chances/perspectives on the labor market?
7. Which skills/competencies should blind or VIPs have/learn for better job perspectives?
8. Are there (old/new) occupational fields that are particularly suitable for blind/VIPs?
9. What should be the next step, where should we start to improve the situation of blind and VIPs on the labor market?

Focus Group Results

Barriers and Gaps

Education (Question 3, 6)

Within this discussion there is a general agreement that low education affects salaries and provides barriers to successful employment. All participants agreed to a minimum level of education and that inclusive, accessible education is important for people with disabilities for their participation in working life, their financial security and the possibility to lead an autonomous life. However, compulsory and inclusive education is often hampered by insufficient support and lack of equal access to the education sector.

During the period of education, blind or visually impaired students have to overcome much more effort and obstacles than students without visual impairment. One participant argued that it is almost

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impossible for blind or visually impaired students to take part in a vocational internship because regular studies are much more strenuous for these students that physical and time resources are often not given to do an internship. However, the lack of vocational training may have a negative effect on later employment opportunities and job requirements.

Work and Unemployment (Question 1, 2, 8)

Although Austria relies on employment quotas for persons with disabilities, blind and VIP continue to be significantly under-represented in the labor market and are much more likely to be affected by unemployment or precarious job conditions. These persons also have greater difficulty in obtaining full-time employment and the share of part-time worker or marginal employees is higher for blind and partially sighted persons than for people with other disabilities.

“In Austria the unemployment rate among blind and visually impaired people is likely to be over 50%, similar to the figures in the USA.”

Several reasons for this high unemployment rate were cited, such as general and too broad job requirements, employers’ attitudes towards blindness or visual impairment, prejudice and discrimination in hiring, inaccessible work environment and conditions, lack of knowledge or training of employers regarding the needs and requirements of blind and VIPs, employers’ ignorance and uncertainty of the abilities of blind and VIPs.

“(…) why in my opinion it is so difficult for people with a visual impairment to get into a job is because of the broad job description in many areas, that it is simply impossible to cover it 100%, if you have a certain limitation. If one would break down these jobs, I think that there would much more possibilities to hire people with a visual impairment or blindness.”

All panelists stated that the lack of opportunities due to visual impairment is a significant barrier to finding a job. Blind people and VIPs in general have limited and restricted career choices or perspectives and are stuck in traditional areas of work (such as brush makers, basket makers, masseurs or call center agents).

“Here I see a fundamental problem, why we have difficulties in getting jobs that are specific to blind people and their possibilities and are in line with their training. Because the private sector wants to be flexible with the pressure of the free market. For this reason, it does not want to take any risks and prefers to employ people who are flexible. So, you can always tell the employers what blind and visually impaired people can do and that this is much more than brush binding and massage. But unfortunately, in my experience, the willingness to think further is very often a victim of the economic considerations of the respective companies.,

As already mentioned, a main topic was the insecurity of the employer and his attitude towards people with disabilities. Employers do not know how to deal with blind or VIPs and for this reason blind or VIPs cannot compete with sighted employees, as they often do not get the opportunity to prove their skills. Employment difficulties can be affected by employer’s concerns skills, flexibility and stamina of blind or partially sighted people. Assumptions about “perceived” costs for assistive devices, support or aids associated with employing a disabled person is another mentioned factor hindering employment of blind and VIPs.

Policy and legislation (Question 1, 3, 4, 6)

Approaches like compensation payments from employers who do not meet the required statutory quota of disabled employees are the main points of criticism of all participants. On the one hand, the

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panelists are in favor of abolishing this compensatory tax or at least of substantially increasing the penalty to be paid in the event of non-compliance. They also advocate that the compensatory tax should not be abolished from a minor employment, but only from a part-time employment.

“After all, it is a question of paying compensation for a person I employ, and I do not even pay my cleaning lady so little when she is marginally employed by me. So, either you raise the tax by a real amount and say that if you do not hire people with disabilities, then you are really paying one person and that is a minimum salary.”

“(…) I think it's similar, it's too little. It's not a budget for a big company. (...) It is not really the motivation behind hiring a disabled person to compensate for this compensatory tax, because it is more or less peanut.”

Additionally a participant adds:

“(…) leave it to our knowledge and skills whether we find a job or not. And not that we are forced by government or that the employer is forced to hire someone.”

The situation is similar with the protection against dismissal of people with disabilities and the majority argues that this is more of an obstacle than a relief and that the willingness to hire favored disabled persons has not increased significantly as a result.

In summary, the participants are in favor of more enforced and stringent legislation that is more restrictive against discrimination, similar to that in the US, and thus provides for more than minimal and, for many companies, ridiculous compensation.

“I think that all this would be easier to implement if we had legislation which, in the case of discrimination, would see more than just compensation for damages, but would require the removal of discrimination. (...) If, however, it is always possible to distribute a consolation patch with a very small financial outlay, but discrimination continues, then the system will never change.”

Accessibility (Question 3, 4, 9)

Limited accessibility and inaccessible systems were identified in this discussion as further barriers to successful employment for people with visual impairments. As one panelist explained:

“Accessibility in the digital world is unfortunately not a matter of course, but a rather rare privilege (...) But accessibility should simply be a built-in thing that we no longer need to talk about.”

“This is also one of those things where you would have to start, and make the software developers responsible and say that if you build a product, then this product must be accessible. So that it is accessible to all people (...).”

Accessibility should not only be established in the legal sense, but also in the context of actual accessibility. The participants are convinced that something is quickly defined by law as barrier-free, but that this does not necessarily mean that the actual accessibility is given.

Possibilities and opportunities

New branches and work opportunities (Question 2, 8, 9)

In the meantime, new occupational fields have opened up as a result of technical developments in information technology, and it is assumed that the intensified and accelerated introduction of digitization into virtually all areas of work will significantly expand the opportunities for blind and visually impaired people, resulting in completely new career and development opportunities.

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“(…) I believe that in IT and in the digital world there are many opportunities to find areas where people with a visual impairment or blind people can work.”

“Most people who are visually impaired or even blind are more likely to be in the area where they can work quite well with technology, with computers, so to speak. So, programmers or IT-specialists or in the second area in consulting. I believe that these are, among other things, two areas that have been pushed more strongly the resources and the necessary support were given and sought by blind and VIPs.”

Skills and competences (Question 2, 6, 8, 9)

On the basis of the discussion participants, skills and training of blind people and VIPs in IT, as well as in consulting (peers) are of particular advantage. However, since web accessibility is (slowly) becoming an increasingly important topic in Austria, it is obvious that it should be implemented by affected persons with the appropriate skills, competences as well as the knowledge of what is needed and how it can be implemented.

Apart from practical experience and user knowledge of technical and assistive tools, experience with personal assistance, based on a participant, can be beneficial.

“From my practice, I can say that it was easier to find a job for people with visual impairments who were already very familiar with the use of technical aids and who perhaps already had experience with personal assistance.”

One participant also argued, that blind and visually impaired people might be good therapists.

“At the moment, in this world full of psychological problems, I can imagine that a psychologist or a psychotherapist is a very, very useful person. I believe that there is no barrier at all for blind, visually impaired people.”

It was also stated that due to increasing digitalization, for example in chemistry and laboratories, a range of jobs will in the near future turn to mainly digital processes with models and calculations and hardly any manual work. Increasing digitalization could therefore be a great advantage for blind and visually impaired people and specialization in digital and technical branches could prove very useful.

How to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market?

Push and pull factors (Question 1, 3, 4, 5, 9)

According to the participants, lack of integration, prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities is blatantly predominant and this fact is particularly reflected in the employment relationship. The economy, company policy and the lack of legislation, which is obstructive or hardly controlled, considerably increase these inequalities and lead to a systemic disadvantage of people with disabilities.

The participants were therefore asked what it would take to integrate people with disabilities, especially blind and visually impaired people, into the labor market and whether push or pull measures would be more beneficial.

The majority (60%) assume that push factors, in the sense of restrictive legislation, can be used to enforce laws and achieve better inclusion.

“We need the enforcement and it must really hurt, otherwise nothing ever changes.”

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“I'm for push, because (...) if there hadn't been legal pressure to make software accessible, the company would never have implemented accessibility. That is simply the case.”

One participant definitely denied legal coercive measures and regulations and found a step-by-step implementation without coercion, but with rewards or benefits more sustainable and meaningful.

“I see it more like that you can achieve much more with pull. It's a lot of work in persuasion, but once you've achieved and enforced it, it's more sustainable. If you now only work with penalties etc., it naturally has a negative connotation and a negative mood can naturally arise in the company. You are only there because otherwise we cannot afford it. Because otherwise we would have to pay this penalty and would not get any support.”

Another participant added that both push and pull mechanisms are equally necessary, and a previous push factor can favor subsequent pull factors.

“You need both sides of that coin. Making a website accessible or making products accessible would probably never happen without a law requiring it or mechanisms in public procurement. If, however, accessibility is handled by law, as it is in the USA, for example, then hopefully affected people will make it accessible and that would be the pull factor and you would manage this push, eventually a pull. (...) Without these regulations, no one would be interested in the fact that services and websites of the public sector or even private providers have to be barrier-free. After all, we see it in Austria, since 2006 we have had the Federal Disability Equality Act and what happens? Nothing, because we have no enforcement.”

Poland Desktop Research: Summary

Statistics

1. The statistical data concerning blind and VIP in Poland is dispersed in different institutions.

A. According to the Central Office of Statistics (GUS) data (as per 2016):

In Poland almost 3 million people, or around 7% of the population, has visual impairment or eye diseases. 42 thousand Poles declare not to see at all. The visual problems occur the most often among the people in the age 60-69 (32 %) and 50-59 (20 %). Children up to 14 years old are the third group in terms of visual impairment.

○ **data concerning University Graduates with disability as per 2017/2018**

- Total: 6 326, including 4 125 women, including 530 university graduates with visual impairment (blind and VIP).

[\[You may find the breakdown by the type of the higher education institutions and the type of studies as well as the broad fields of education \(blind and VIP only in the Desktop Research Report of Poland\]](#)

○ **data concerning number of students with disabilities as per 31.12.2018:**

- Total: 22 046, including 12 986 women. Blind and VIP: 1 886, including 1 186 at the full-time programmes and 700 at the part-time programmes.

B. According to the Census (as per 2011):

There were 4 217 596 biologically disabled persons, including 155 433 people with visual impairment only.

[\[You may find the breakdown by economic age groups as well as residency breakdown in the Desktop Research Report of Poland\]](#)

C. According to the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People based on the Electronic National Disability Assessment Monitoring System as per 6.04.2020:

- People having a disability certificate (about the disability degree or granted reliefs and benefits) or by the Court judgment: 4 112 762, including 147187 (3.5%) persons with visual impairment.
- Disability degree breakdown: mild 55 066, moderate 58 685, severe 33 436.
- Age breakdown: 16-25 years old 16 786, 26-40 years old 17 233, 41-59 years old 44 097, 60 years old and more 69 069.
- Gender breakdown: women 83 965, men 63 222.
- Education level breakdown: less than primary 9 193, primary and lower-secondary school education 37 954, basic vocational education 37 611, secondary education 45 503, higher education 16 926.
- Labour market status: persons with a job 26 475, non-working persons 120 712.

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D. According to the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled:

○ **data concerning Employees and employers registered in the Supplementary Financing and Reimbursement Servicing System (SODiR) as per April 2020**

- Total employers: 29 775, including 804 Supported Employment Enterprises and 28 971 open market enterprises.
- 5 848 disabled persons, carrying out an economic activity, who claimed the refund of social insurance premiums costs, including 700 of people with severe disability, 3 418 with moderate disability and 1 730 with mild disability.

As per March 2020:

- Totally 228 479 disabled employees, including 93 340 in supported employment enterprises and 135 139 in open market enterprises.

E. According to the Polish Association of the Blind, as per 2019

○ **39 951 members, including 37 092 ordinary members, including 21 617 women, 15 475 men.**

- Breakdown by disability degree:
 - 19 461 with severe disability degree
 - 17 631 with moderate disability degree
 - 2 859 wards (up to 18 years old)
 - Blind and VIP, in working age population, non-working, interested in finding a job: 2 717, including 1 497 women and 1 220 men.
 - Blind and VIP employed: 4 871, including 2 289 women, 2 582 men.

[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more details](#)

Stakeholders

2. The most important governmental institutions working for blind and VIP in Poland are:

- A. *PFRON – The State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled* (pfron.org.pl) operates for all the disabled persons, blind and visually impaired included.

The mission of The State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled People is to create conditions facilitating full participation in professional and social life for Persons with Disabilities.

PFRON's financing mechanisms are based mainly on contributions made by employers who fail to hire the required number of disabled employees. Funds allocated for PFRON's projects come from obligatory monthly contributions made by employers who hire at least 25 full-time employees (considering their working hours) yet the percentage of disabled people among their staff is lower than 6%. Our Fund's beneficiaries include employers, individuals and non-governmental organizations and foundations. The largest part of funds is granted by PFRON directly to employers as remuneration funding. PFRON's funds are also granted to disabled individuals, non-governmental organizations supporting disabled people and specialized entities such as occupational therapy workshops or social economy undertakings such as vocational development centres. A part of funds which goes mainly to disabled individuals is distributed through district self-governments. Units subordinate to them collect applications for funding and, after considering them, transfer the respective funds.

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You can find more detailed info concerning the Fund's activities at <https://www.pfron.org.pl/en.html>

B. Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People

I. Legal basis

Legal basis of the Office of the Plenipotentiary is laid down in the art. 34 paragraph 10 of the act on vocational and social rehabilitation and the employment of persons with disabilities. The Plenipotentiary performs his task with the aid of the Office of the Plenipotentiary which forms a separate organizational unit in the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. The Office of the Plenipotentiary acts in accordance with its own regulations and it is supervised only by the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People.

II. The Office of the Plenipotentiary consists of 5 Divisions and 3 independent units.

- i. Division for Vocational Rehabilitation and Public Aid*
- ii. Independent Unit for the Social Rehabilitation and Cooperation with the Local Government Units*
- iii. Division for Administrative Procedures*
- iv. Division for the Supervision of the Disability Assessment*
- v. Division for Analysis and International Co-operation*
- vi. Independent Unit for the Social Communication*
- vii. Independent Unit for Legislation and Legal Affairs*

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more details\]](#)

3. Educators in Poland that work for blind and VIP.

There are 11 special schools and educational centres for visually impaired pupils in Poland. Below you may find the information on some of them:

- A. In Laski, near Warsaw: The most famous special educational institution for children with visual impairment is Mather Elisabeth Róża Czacka School and Education Centre:** (<http://www.laski.edu.pl>). Educational offer encompasses all the education stages, from the kindergarten, through the primary school, to the high schools: General secondary school, Massage Technical School, Technical School for the Blind (massage, IT), Vocational School (textile craftsman, industrial maintenance engineer, locksmith), Post-Secondary School (massage, IT, administrative clerk). For blind and partially sighted pupils with learning difficulties, who need individual learning approach, especially those with multiple disability (mostly with intellectual disability) there are in the Educational Centre in Laski special schools: Primary School, Vocational Preparatory School, and there is a special department for deafblind. Moreover, there is a Primary Music School in Laski as well as a Music Teaching Centre.
- B. In Warsaw: Special School and Education Centre nr 8** (<http://www.kozminska.edu.pl>) offers to pupils with the strongly weakened view the education in the Primary School, in the Vocational School (cook), as well as in the General Secondary School.
- C. In Lublin: Special School and Education Centre in Lublin.**
Pursuant to the growing number of the population of children with multiple disability among children with disability in general (as well as among blind and partially sighted) in September 2012 r. the name of the Special School and Education Centre for the Blind and Partially Sighted

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Children changed the name to the Prof. Zofia Sekowska Special School and Education Centre for Disabled Children and Youth in Lublin and there were changes implemented in the Centre's structure, such as the integration of three schools: Vocational School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Vocational School for Blind and Partially Sighted as well as of the Supplementary General Secondary School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and for the Blind and Partially Sighted.

Additionally, there were more schools established: Technical School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Pupils, Blind, Partially Sighted, with Motor Disability, including those with Aphasia, Autism, Asperger syndrome and with multiple disabilities.

(<http://www.soswlublin.pl/hirszfelda/>).

- D. *In Bydgoszcz: Louis Braille Special School and Education Centre Nr 1 for Blind and Partially Sighted Children and Youth* (<http://www.braille.bydgoszcz.pl>) encompasses the Primary School, General Secondary School, Vocational Preparatory School, Vocational School (maintenance technicians, industrial maintenance engineer, locksmith, cook, auxiliary worker in the hotel service), as well as college of further education. School centre in Bydgoszcz was the first one in Poland, in which there was a department for the Deafblind established (in 1985), which operates for the pupils with the simultaneous visual and hearing impairment.
- E. *In Chorzów: Special School and Education Centre for the Blind and Partially Sighted Children and Youth* (<http://sosw.slask.pl/?sosw-chorzow,7>) offers vocational education (cook, baker, confectioner, seller, locksmith). In the centre operate: Massage and Physiotherapy Technical Schools, Administration Technical School, Vocational Multiprofessional School (vocational training at the workplace), as well as Post-Secondary school of the Massage and Physiotherapy. Other Special School and Education Centres in Poland are in Dabrowa Gornicza, Cracow, Lodz, Wroclaw, Owinska near Poznan, in Radom.

Special School and Education Centres, which primarily served only the blind and VIP nowadays adapt their activity to the special needs of the disabled. A visible sign of their transformation is their opening up to pupils with multiple disabilities with a complete or partial sight loss and with other disabilities, without visual impairment. Teachers employed in mainstream education can benefit from experience of special education teachers working in these special education centres.

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more information on Special School and Education Centres for the Blind in Poland\]](#)

4. Traditional employers for blind and VIP on the labour market; their role and potential.

There are some traditional employers for blind and VIP in Poland. It is not possible to mention all of them, but just to mention a few:

- A. A Library for the Blind, that once belonged to the Polish Association of the Blind, now is a part of the library of the Family, Work and Social Politics Ministry.
- Website: www.dzdn.pl
- B. Co-operatives for the Blind.
- a) There were many of them during the real socialism time, but now still some of them remain. Some of them used to produce goods, such as brushes, paint brushes, cables, etc. The majority of them disappeared from the market. Very few remain.

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Below you will find the examples of vocational development centres established by the organisations working for the blind.

a) *The Agricultural Vocational Development Centre founded by the Foundation Praca dla Niewidomych (Work for the Blind Foundation) in Stanisławów*

Established with the support of Committee for the Blind of Poland and by the Foundation Praca dla Niewidomych, the Agricultural Vocation Development Centre in Stanisławów runs activities directed to social and vocational rehabilitation of persons with severe and moderate disability levels. It employs more than eighty people, among which fifty-eight are persons with disabilities. It offers gastronomic services: sale of agricultural goods from its own farm (fruit and vegetables), honey from its own apiary, hand-made products and also organizes picnics.

- Website: <http://www.fpdn.org.pl/oferta.html>

b) *The Vocational Development Centre run by Polish Association of the Blind (PAB) in Olsztyn*

The main goal is social and vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The Centre is located at the facility belonging to Polish Association of the Blind close to the Residential home, Clinic and three communal homes of mutual aid. Our unit provides a range of services. The gastronomic department prepares meals for the residential centre and allocated tasks from the municipality such as meals for persons from the social aid centre. People engaged in the sewing room prepare duvet covers, masks and uniforms and are engaged in other activities for the PAB units. The laundry provides services for persons living at the residential centre. The gardening department manages plants around the campus. The centre employs fifty-one persons, including thirty-four with disabilities.

- e-mail: sekretariat@zazolsztyn.pzn.org.pl

Generally speaking, their role is still important. In Poland, blind people over 40 years old and professionally active in most cases work in traditional occupations.

We can observe nowadays, that young people who have accomplished studies at universities sometimes train themselves as masseurs. In their view, finding a job in this profession may be easier or that additional employment as a masseur might be a source of extra money.

There are different views and opinions, but there is a group of people who think that it is a great pity that so many co-operatives employing blind persons disappeared from the market, as they were offering the job for many visually impaired persons, who were keen to do simple and repetitive work.

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more information and examples of ZAZ in Poland\]](#)

5. Different End User Organisations for blind and VIP that are active in Poland; scope of the activity and target groups.

- i. Polish Association of the Blind, office in Warsaw, e-mail: pzn@pzn.org.pl
- ii. AMD Poland Retina Association, Warsaw, e-mail: retinaamd@retinaamd.org.pl
- iii. The Work for the Blind Foundation, Warsaw, e-mail: fpdn@fpdn.org.pl
- iv. Chance for the Blind, Warsaw, e-mail: szansa@szansadlaniewidomych.org

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- v. The Foundation for Polish Blind and Visually Impaired 'Trakt', Warsaw, e-mail: fundacja@trakt.org.pl
- vi. Regional Fund for Helping the Blind, Chorzów, e-mail: galla.n@plusnet.pl
- vii. Henryk Ruszczyc Association for Helping People with Disabilities "Larix", Warsaw, e-mail: biuro@stowarzyszenielarix.pl
- viii. Vis Maior Foundation, Warsaw, e-mail: j.kramarz@fundacjavismaior.pl
- ix. Audiodescription Foundation, Białystok, e-mail: fundacja@audiodeskrypcja.org.pl
- x. Foundation for the Blind "Labrador" Guide Dog, Poznań, e-mail: d.grzybkowska@fundacja.labrador.pl
- xi. Association of Physical Culture, Sport and Tourism for the Blind and Visually Impaired CROSS, Warsaw, e-mail: biuro@cross.org.pl
- xii. Foundation Institute for Regional Development, Krakow, e-mail: biuro@firr.org.pl
- xiii. Culture without barriers Foundation, Warsaw, e-mail: fundacja@kulturabezbarier.com
- xiv. The World according to Louis Braille Foundation, e-mail: biuro@swiatbrajla.org.pl
- xv. Modern Education Foundation, Warsaw, e-mail: biuro@fen.net.pl

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more information about the organisations for the blind and VIP in Poland\]](#)

Some of the organisations specialise in a specific sector, area, such as assisting blind children or making culture accessible for the blind advocacy.

However, some of them are active in all the fields, employment of the blind and visually impaired included.

The most active in the field of employment for the visually impaired are: Chance for the Blind Foundation, Foundation Institute for Regional Development, Modern Education Foundation, Polish Association of the Blind, The Foundation for Polish Blind and Visually Impaired 'Trakt'.

6. Labour market service providers for blind and VIP in Poland

There are various Labour market services providers in Poland, but here we will focus on those, who should or effectively help blind and VIP and just mention some others.

A. Public employment services

In Poland public employment services (publiczne służby zatrudnienia; PSZ) include the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, the provincial employment offices together with their subsidiaries, and the county employment offices. The relevant Minister of Labour plays the main role as they constitute the main entity that coordinates the employment and labour-market policy on the central level. The need for coordination is a consequence of the dispersed model of the public employment services.

The tasks of the Ministry primarily comprise the fulfilment of tasks connected with the function of the Labour Fund manager. This Fund provides resources for active labour-market programs in Poland as well as the unemployment benefits paid by the public employment services. Moreover, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy is responsible for the development of measures and methods for the field of occupational counselling, employment agencies, trainings organization for the unemployed, and persons seeking employment activation; it coordinates the functioning of the EURES network; gathers and analyses data on labour market, implements certain ESF priorities and prepares reports for the open coordination method under the European Employment Strategy.

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The labour-market related tasks of the province authorities (regions) are realized by the provincial employment offices, and include: the development and implementation of the regional employment actions plans; the measurement of the surplus and shortage positions demands; the organization and coordination of the occupational counselling and the employment services on the regional level; the diagnosis of labour market needs connected with permanent education and vocational training; the definition and implementation of the measures for adjusting the fields of education and vocational training to the labour market needs; keeping a register of the training institutions; maintaining the social dialogue in the domain of employment and education policy; managing the information and occupational career planning centres for the unemployed and job-seeking persons in order to activate them.

On the county (local) level, the implementation of employment policy lies within the responsibility of the county employment offices.

[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more details]

However, for many reasons, the PSZ are unable to face labour-market challenges on their own. Thus, the necessity for other (public and non-public) entities activity arises to support employment and occupational activation policy.

It should be mentioned here, that Blind and VIP in Poland, who receive any kind of the allowance (e.g. social pension or invalidity pension) can not register in public employment services as “unemployed”, as they are not entitled to receive any unemployment benefit. They can only register as “job seeking persons”.

They are entitled to health insurance the most often thanks to the social pension of invalidity pension they touch.

Therefore the majority of the blind and VIP who do not work and who receive any kind of allowance do not see any interest in registering themselves in the register of the public employment services. Of course, as “job seeking persons” they are entitled to vocational courses and they can profit from other forms of assistance, but in the majority of cases they look for this kind of help in the non-governmental sector.

Blind and VIP are very rare clients of the public employment services.

The only group which register frequently, are jobless people who want to start their own business. They have to register in the public employment services, as they want to obtain the money which will allow them to start their own business. In order to receive a non-reimbursable loan, one have to register in the local job office as an “unemployed” or “job seeking person” (being jobless).

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more details concerning the above mentioned loan possibility\]](#)

The money for this purpose comes from the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (The State Funds for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled financial resources come from the employers, who decide not to employ disabled persons). At present (July 2020), each employer who employs more than 25 persons is obliged to achieve a level of 6% employment of the disabled. If the employer does not reach this level, she/he has to pay the compulsory contributions to the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled People.

All this money is distributed to those who want to start their own business by the local employment offices where people have to apply for the funding.

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B. The Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) as a labour-market institution

The Voluntary Labour Corps (Polish Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy, OHP) is a state-run organisational unit working to prevent the social exclusion of young people. In line with the current Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions, the Voluntary Labour Corps is a labour market institution supervised by the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy that performs state tasks directed towards teenagers over 15 years of age, and the unemployed under 25 years of age, that include employment services, counteract social marginalization and social exclusion, as well as tasks related to education and upbringing.

Young blind and VIP are not frequent clients of the OHP services.

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more information about OHP in Poland\]](#)

C. Employment agencies

Employment agencies are other primarily non-public labour-market institutions that provide national and international employment services, occupational counselling, personal counselling and temporary employment. These institutions may be divided according to the service types in the following way: the employment service agencies, the personal counselling agencies, the occupational counselling agencies and the temporary employment agencies. The entities that may run the employment agencies are: private undertakings, local authorities, higher education institutions, associations, funds as well as social and occupational organizations.

The private sector plays the dominant role in the domain of the employment agencies. The non-governmental sector has a significant role of the employment agencies, the public one a minor number and the church sector plays almost no role, with only 1 institution of this kind.

Contrary to the standardized services by the public employment administration, the employment agencies are often more flexible and respond to varied needs of the customers.

Blind and VIP refer the most often to the non-governmental sector. The majority of the non-governmental institutions, which undertake the pro-employment activities for the blind applied for the certificate of the employment agency. Polish Association of the Blind is one of them.

As per July 2020, there were 8,838 entities registered as the employment agencies.

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more information about the employment agencies in Poland\]](#)

D. Training institutions

Training institutions are another labour-market entity. These include both public and non-public entities providing out-of-school education and registered in the provincial employment offices. It can be assumed that the legislator's main idea was to establish these institutions for the benefit of the unemployed, however they actually serve the employed as permanent education facilities. The legislation for the training institutions is Art. 20 of the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions of 20 April 2004, and the Regulation of the Minister of Economy and Labour on the training institutions register of 27 October 2004. Each training institution that aims at using the public resources (the Labour Fund, the European Social Fund, the National Rehabilitation Fund for Persons with Disabilities) as a subcontractor, needs to have an entry in the Training Institutions Register (Rejestr Instytucji Szkoleniowych; RIS).

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more details\]](#)

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E. The role of the non-governmental organizations in the employment policy

The importance of non-governmental entities is significant in the domain of the labour-market policy implementation.

In Poland, after passing the Acts: on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions as well as on Public Benefit and Voluntary Work in 2004, the non-governmental organizations gained eligibility to undertake measures for employment and human resources development. It has been assumed that the non-governmental organizations can successfully complement numerous service deficits that the public employment services fail to provide (especially for the persons who are disadvantaged in the labour market the most, i.e. the long-term unemployed and socially excluded persons, disabled persons included). The non-governmental organizations are certainly extremely interesting labour-market entities, giving to many graduates a possibility of voluntary work, and gaining first occupational experience as well as the institutions which offer flexible employment, all the more so because the very non-governmental organizations offer thousands of stable job positions.

It is difficult to give the exact number of the non-governmental organizations functioning in the domain of the labour-market services (for many organizations this function may be marginal), however, rough statistical data show that out of the total 80,100 registered non-governmental organizations in Poland at the end of the 2018 year, approximately 1,200 provided services for the unemployed.

The fact that the non-governmental organizations specialize in service provision to the specific groups of recipients, often other than the ones provided for by the public employment services, is an important argument for the increase in their participation in the labour-market policy in Poland. The fact that these organizations provide services for those who are not covered by other institutions is particularly crucial.

Most frequently, these include difficult groups in the context of the labour market – the disabled, former prisoners, the socially excluded or disadvantaged persons. They are often provided with highly individual and complex support and it is why groups of special needs in the majority of cases prefer to address them while looking for help in the employment area.

Polish Association of the Blind (PZN) is the biggest organisation for the blind and visually impaired persons in Poland.

As one of the aims of our Association is to help blind and VIP in the context of employment, our Association, as some other organizations for the blind carries out, almost regularly, from 2004, projects, the aim of which is to help blind and VIP to enter the job market.

The Polish Association of the Blind was the first organization for the blind, which started to carry out this kind of projects.

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more details\]](#)

There are many other organizations, mostly with the regional or national scope of activities, which are active in the same area.

To sum up, it has to be stated that the employment and labour market policy in Poland is implemented by various public, non-governmental and private entities. People with visual impairment look for the assistance in the majority of cases in the non-governmental sector, which offers them the specialised support, with the individual approach.

Information on the job market service providers come, among the others, from the website of the OHP and from the article of Miroslaw Grewinski (<http://mirek.grewinski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/the-institutions-of-employment-and-labour-market-policy-in-poland.pdf>)

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7. Different common views on the blind and visually impaired persons

F. Situation of blind and visually impaired people on the labour market.

Blind and visually impaired people have many problems in finding a job on both the open and the protected market. Visual impairment significantly reduces professional opportunities. People, who do not have appropriate education and skills in new information and communication technologies, have little chance to find employment. There are also well-educated people, but this does not always mean good rehabilitation skills and the ability to coexist with others.

This is a broad issue. The group of persons with visual disability is varied. There are people who lost their eyesight at various times in their lives, were born blind, became blind in adolescence or adulthood, and elderly people. They are talented and average, educated and without education. Their level of interpersonal competences is diverse.

In Poland the majority of visually impaired remain unemployed, although there are professions, e.g. telemarketer or masseur where the blind manages well. But despite this, the choice and the number of job offers is very limited.

Automation and inaccessibility of modern tools has led to the non-employment of less educated blind and VIP.

Blind people, due to the specificity of their disability, are mostly employed in intellectual and service work.

People with multiple disabilities are in the critical situation on the job market.

It is worth mentioning, that the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has proved that blind people using modern technologies were able to adapt quickly to remote work.

a) Pension "trap"

In Poland there is a so-called problem of disability social pension "trap" and strict provision regarding the obligation to return an unduly paid benefit: if monthly income exceeds 70% of the average salary any person receiving that benefit should pay it back totally. For unemployed disabled, this pension is the only source of income. This amount is small: 300 EUR monthly with subsistence costs comparable to other EU countries. There is no refund policy zloty for zloty: e.g. if the employer's monthly income exceeds 70% of average salary by 1 zl, this person should pay back the whole amount of the social pension. First of all, there is the fear of losing pension and the right to a pension. From time to time, a temporary certificate of incapacity for work needs to be renewed, because a permanent certificate is now rare. The doctor (disability examiner) first asks if the applicant works, and in case of confirmation, may not admit the decision and consider that person fit for work. This results in no being entitled to a pension.

Employers are discouraged by the privileges of employed blind and visually impaired people, such as: shorter working time, the right to additional leave of 10 working days or the possibility of going to the doctor during work without having to work it off, reduced work capacity as well as complicated procedures related to payroll subsidies or to workplace equipment. Employers do not have reliable knowledge about the limitations and professional possibilities of disabled people. They are concerned about the safety of blind and visually impaired employees and are afraid of responsibility if such a person suffers an accident. There is a common belief that they are unable to offer suitable jobs for blind and VIP.

b) Mental barriers

The reasons inherent in the employee himself are: a negative attitude towards work, a significant reduction in activity and ability to perform specific tasks, as well as a lack of non-economic motivation to work, too low resistance to stress and frustration, a lack of professional qualifications and the ability to behave properly in difficult and stressful situations .

Blind people reveal a number of problems, difficulties that are an inseparable consequence of the lack of vision, but above all they reveal the will to fight their weaknesses and unpleasant

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experiences, and the will to fight for the implementation of their tasks, which are usually not ordinary tasks but challenges. There are also those who are very involved in their professional work. They perform their professional duties with great commitment and often with passion. In addition, the workplace is for them a plane of integration, a place where they realize themselves socially and shape their individuality.

Visually impaired young people have many expectations and desires regarding their future work, from earning a lot of money through job satisfaction, recognition and respect in the environment, recognition of superiors, willingness to be promoted, and ending with good relations at work. However, young low vision people mainly focus on social prestige and job satisfaction. Sometimes young people have too high aspirations and this makes it difficult for them to find a job. A significant proportion of the surveyed youth are afraid of unemployment and deterioration or loss of vision, which may exclude them from their professional roles or cause difficulties in finding a job.

There is also a group of young blind and visually impaired people who do not want to work and prefer a safe life at home.

In our country there are few examples of blind researchers, teachers, psychologists, social workers, rehabilitation instructors, legal advisers, IT specialists, journalists, translators, sound operators, masseurs, telephonists and qualified production workers, etc. These are people who fulfill their tasks and professional duties well, in line with employer's expectations.

Studies

8. Traditional job areas for blind and VIP in Poland

- Co-operatives were in the past traditional employers for the blind.
- The majority of them were created in the '50 and '60. From their creation till the late '80, the State totally assigned to them the responsibility of the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled persons (blind and VIP included).
- There were many cooperatives for the blind in Poland. They used to produce all kinds of brushes, knitted clothes, fashion metal accessories, electrical wires, etc.
- They offered the employees complex support and rehabilitation: education, occupational therapy, professional work, medical care and participation in the social life (culture, sport, tourism). Experience gathered during this period of the co-operatives prosperity resulted in the creation of the rehabilitation model called a "Polish school of rehabilitation".
- The World Health Organisation and the World Work Organisation considered it to be a perfect model for other countries.
- With the political transformation at the beginning of the '90, the majority of them had disappeared from the market.
- They were totally submitted to the market rules.
- Cheap products imported from Asiatic countries and new market mechanisms led to the ruin of the majority of these co-operatives.
- Only a few of them remained, changing their business activity profile – e.g. from producing knitted clothes to telemarketing or changing the rules of their activity (e.g. employing less people, only a few disabled, etc.).
- Nowadays, the traditional job areas for the blind and VIP in Poland are: massage, office work especially in NGOs, property security (VIP), telemarketing, IT.

9. Emerging job areas for blind and VIP in Poland

There are some new job opportunities for the blind, e.g. waiters in the dark, IT specialist for the blind, telemarketers, but it could be considered an exaggeration to call them "emerging job areas for blind and VIP" as there is no significant number of people, who work in those areas and it is very hard to say, if the demand in this areas will increase.

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10. Various obstacles and barriers for employment of blind and VIP in Poland

Because of important diversification, interpenetration of various impact factors and sensitivity to external factors, reasons of low professional activity of the disabled persons (blind and VIP included) are extremely difficult to identify and systematize.

Taking into consideration that employment of the disabled person has to result from a “friendly” set of conditions, decision of the employee and of the employer, reasons of low professional activity of the disabled can be divided into four areas, as causes resulting from the attitude of the disabled person, the attitude of the employer, working environment conditions and external environment.

The elements of external environment which constitute potential causes of the disabled low professional activity can be divided into four groups:

- A. Professional rehabilitation system functioning
- B. Barriers faced by the disabled
- C. Job market conditions
- D. Law background

These barriers, directly related to a disabled person:

- have an operational nature (urban planning, transportation, communication, technical and architectural),
- influence a level of development of a disabled person (in access to information and education),
- are psychosocial (segregation and social isolation of a disabled person)
- and have a financial character, taking into account State capacity in this sector.

Complicated procedures and diverse sources of financial support constitute limitations arising from the external environment and, at the same time, being a derivative of the operating procedures of the rehabilitation system.

Quality of services for the disabled, such as career guidance, placement services and problems related to training, as well as the lack of suitable job offers and significant demand have an important influence on low professional activity of the disabled.

Additional special needs (medical rehabilitation, medical care, care services), psychical characteristics (e.g. lower concentration, impatience and anxiety), limitations related to the disability (work conditions, work place, type and time of work), contraindication (health state, disability type and level, age), psychological profile (too low expectations, lower interpersonal competencies, low self-esteem, apathy, lack of motivation) and lower productivity (poor professional preparation resulting from lower qualifications or lack of requalification possibility, lower productivity due to the lower mental or physical ability, shorter work time due to the sick leaves and statutory powers assigned to them, inferior work quality and restricted mobility) are other potential barriers to market entry on the side of the disabled persons.

Additional duties imposed on employers resulting from the employment of the disabled persons, having to bear increased costs for functioning of a company as well as existing prejudices and stereotypes have a significant impact on employers’ decisions and attitudes.

[\[Please see the Desktop Research Report of Poland for more information on various obstacles and barriers for employment of blind and VIP in Poland\]](#)

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11. Find the impact analysis of employment for blind and VIP.

According to the surveys results, work is of particular value for people with disabilities. In the opinion of the Polish Association of the Blind and according to the surveys, for blind and visually impaired people employment is not only a source of income, a form of rehabilitation, but mostly an opportunity for social inclusion and increased self-esteem. It assures financial independence and creates opportunities for professional development. If a person is employed in accordance with his/her qualifications, it is a source of professional and personal satisfaction.

<https://core.ac.uk/reader/83086592>

<https://core.ac.uk/reader/299332921>

12. The assistive technology usage, supply and their accessibility for blind and VIP people in Poland

Assistive technologies help blind and VIP in everyday life, education, job and finally in free time. Since the development of first speech synthesizers for the blind in the late 1980s, the world of modern assistive technologies has undergone radical transformation. It is hard to imagine a blind person without these modern goods to function almost independently in today's world.

Modern technological solutions may be divided into the following categories:

- Technologies prepared for the target group that is for blind and VIP such as: screen reading and magnifying software, Braille displays and notetakers, Braille embossers, special keyboards suitable for low vision, devices and the range of tools and software designed only for the blind and VIP.
- Devices and software prepared for all but with the universal design in mind such as modern smartphones, particularly iOS devices, accessible software that is compatible with screen reading technologies and with magnification and contrast mechanisms.
- Devices for all that are inaccessible and their adaptation for the blind is strictly limited or rather impossible.

Devices prepared only for the blind and VIP have overall advantage over other ones as they are designed only for this group of people and their accessibility is guaranteed even with future updates. The strong disadvantage is the price, as these special devices are produced only for a small number of people. Given this, their price is often overestimated but various forms of governmental subsidies make up for high prices. Devices from the second category have a relatively reasonable price and might be purchased by a blind person or with financial support. There is, in fact, the danger of possible inaccessibility when the developer updates software limiting its capabilities for blind and VIP. Those inaccessible devices from the third group are not supported by the state and their accessibility is hardly possible.

Availability of assistive technologies:

In Poland, various devices might be purchased:

- In shops selling equipment only for blind and low vision. In these stores, one may purchase devices prepared only for the blind or other such as smartphones;
- In shops and network retailers where one may purchase accessible and inaccessible devices such as computers, smartphones, etc.

The main concern of persons with disabilities is availability of modern equipment. Due to low pensions and, in most cases, not sufficient remuneration for work, they are unable to purchase necessary equipment, especially designed for them. As banks are reluctant to conclude instalment agreements, their financial capacity is also limited by this unfriendly approach

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towards them. In Poland, the key legal framework for persons with disabilities is an Act of Social and Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities of 29 August, 1997 with subsequent amendments. According to the provisions of this act, it is the role of the state to support persons with disabilities, mainly in rehabilitation and vocational development. Supply of modern technologies is also the form of vocational rehabilitation. Programmes addressed to persons with disabilities are to help them purchase necessary equipment. We differentiate three main programmes addressed to persons with the severe and moderate level of disability:

- Active Self-Government , the financial support to purchase equipment for persons with disabilities. According to the provisions, persons with disabilities may apply for financial assistance to buy: computer software and devices, modern smartphones and Braille equipment (Braille displays, Braille notetakers, Braille printers, etc.). If required, a person may also apply for additional training to get familiar with the purchased equipment. In this programme, a blind and VIP shall pay at least 10-percent contribution, the rest is paid by municipal Aid Centres which distribute financial resources to cover this programme from the State fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled.
- Support in Overcoming Technical and Communication Barriers. In this programme, persons with disabilities may apply to cover the costs of devices such as smartphones, computers, etc. to overcome communication barriers. After the positive decision, a beneficiary pays at least 20 percent of total price and the rest is covered by local municipality with the financial support of State Rehabilitation Fund for the Disabled.

These two programmes support persons with disabilities but it does not mean that any equipment may be purchased at any time. The programme sets out time limits, usually three up to five years to be entitled to benefit from the programme again. In both cases, the support cannot exceed certain amounts incorporated to the provisions that are annually renewed.

In some municipalities, additional local programmes help blind and VIP purchase necessary equipment: e.g. the municipality of Warsaw introduced the programme “A Virtual Warsaw” that provided financial support to purchase smartphones.

13. Job Satisfaction level of blind & VIP in Poland

The satisfaction that disabled people get from work

– analysis of chosen aspects from the research report of the PFRON (State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled).

The report is available in full version (in Polish) at

http://www.pfron.org.pl/porta1/pl/70/77/Badania_i_analizy_PFRON.html

[You may find the summary of the above mentioned report in the Desktop Research Report of Poland](#)

14. Other studies of blind and VIP available in Poland

During the years, there were many studies on blind and VIP in Poland.

Just to mention a few:

- A. The Survey on the disabled persons educational level and branch influence on the professional activity.

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The perspective of the blind and VIP - Part 2 (total 6 parts)

https://www.pfron.org.pl/fileadmin/files/r/7778_Raport_CZESC_2z6_N_wzrokowo_final.pdf?utm_campaign=pfron&utm_source=df&utm_medium=download

B. The Survey on the needs of the disabled persons:

<https://www.pfron.org.pl/instytucje/badania-i-analzy-naukowe/raport-koncowy-z-badania-potrzeb-osob-niepelnospprawnych/>

C. The Survey on the NGOs activity in the areas of the disabled persons inclusion, and social as well as vocational rehabilitation:

https://www.pfron.org.pl/fileadmin/files/d/7765_DZIALALNOSC_ONG.pdf?utm_campaign=pfron&utm_source=df&utm_medium=download

D. Anxiety in persons with visual impairment

http://www.psychiatriapolska.pl/uploads/images/PP_2_2020/279Binder_PsychiatrPol2020v54i2.pdf

Support Schemes

15. Describe the AT provision schemes available in your country.

The main act regulating overall support of persons with disabilities is the Act of Vocational and Social Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities of 29 August, 1997. The act has been amended to existing regulations and growing needs of persons with disabilities. One of key principles of this act is vocational rehabilitation and support of persons with disabilities in terms of equipment and rehabilitation tools. Although it does not explicitly mention the fact of purchasing equipment for persons with disabilities, its supply and financial support fulfils goals set out in the law. More specifically, the support of persons with disabilities as regards purchase of assistive technologies is laid down in the annual time framework drafted and published by the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled. Such regulations outline main goals and conditions of support as well as the range of persons entitled to receive support and maximal financial support granted for persons with disabilities. These regulations also outline scope of the programme. Essentially, state support does not only include purchase of that equipment but training if necessary. Such training is doubled for deaf blind persons. If such training is insufficient, a person may seek assistance in NGOs that carry out relevant projects either locally or nationally.

To support employment, the Rehabilitation act and subsequent provisions enable it to cover relevant costs to equip a person's workplace so that they have proper tools to perform their work. These provisions impose obligation to the employer. It means such persons entitled for that compensation should be employed for at least thirty-six months. In case that person does not work or is not willing to work, an employer shall seek for persons with similar disabilities to employ them on the same post.

Generally, the above mentioned form of support works well, but It happens that local municipalities do not want to engage in such programmes or limit their scope and persons with disabilities are deprived of financial support in these regions.

16. The various special education courses available for blind and VIP in Poland

- There are special education establishments mentioned above (point 3). The age limit for those special education centres is 24.
- There are no regular special courses for pupils who turned 24.
- There are different pro-employment projects, with national or EU funding, carried out mostly by NGOs dedicated to the blind and VIP in which blind and VIP can participate in various

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activities, such as training courses tailored to their needs. Due to financial reasons, those vocational courses are mostly carried out in groups.

- From the experience of the Polish Association of the Blind, the most popular vocational courses tailored for the blind and VIP are:
 - Data entry operator
 - Handcraft maker
 - Website designer and administrator
 - Mediator
 - Professional NGO employee
 - Office clerk
- Blind and VIP, who are specialists in their domains, such as massage are sometimes put into the trainings organised in the open market (e.g. massage with hot stones, massage with chocolate, ayurvedic massage, etc.)
- As far as computer courses are concerned, the most effective are individual courses. Very often they are carried out in the office of the entity responsible for carrying out a project, in the participant's home and nowadays, very often such courses are carried out in a distant way, via different computer applications, such as skype, zoom, etc.
- Those computer courses are a kind of complement to vocational courses as computers are nowadays a work tool for the blind.
- Sometimes, such pro-employment projects also cover language courses. Individual lessons are expensive, but more effective.

17. Various kinds of financial support schemes available for blind and VIP

- Most are for the employers of the disabled persons.

For the blind: training, co-financing for equipment (for private use, Active Self-Government Programme described in the points 12, 19 and in [\[the Desktop Research Report of Poland\]](#))

18. The support schemes available that benefit Employers for hiring blind and VIP in their organisation

- A. Co-financing for salaries, the amount of co-financing depends on the degree of the employee's disability.
- B. Intervention actions: for employers seeking for disabled unemployed persons, addressed to unemployed persons with disabilities (State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons), partial refund of salaries for a period of 6, 12, 18 or 24 months up to the amount of unemployment benefits, also social insurance fees;
- C. Refund costs to purchase equipment; employers seeking for unemployed disabled workers, concerns employing an unemployed person with disability, financed by State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, the maximum amount cannot exceed fifteen average salaries, a disabled person shall be employed for at least 36 months, refund is granted after signing a proper agreement between a company and rehabilitation fund;
- D. Adaptation of the environment for persons with disabilities - employers wanting to employ disabled job seekers, may apply for extra money to adapt the environment, the maximum amount is up to 20 average salaries, a person shall be employed for at least 36 months, refund is paid on the basis of an individual agreement with an employer (State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons).

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19. Best practices of support schemes for employment of blind and VIP

- In 2012, the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled announced the programme “Active Self-Government”. The overall aim of this programme is to support persons with disabilities by covering costs of equipment, software necessary for daily living, higher education and employment. This programme is supposed to operate within the whole territory of Poland. This is a systemic solution that fosters social and vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and thus helps them to be included into society. The programme is close to the citizens and, as the name suggests, all matters related to submission of an application as well as further formalities are performed in the municipality closest to the person's place of residence. Financial resources, assigned from the state budget, are provided by the aforementioned State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled.

The programme has a two-module structure.

[You can find more information about the Active Self-Government Programme in the point 12] and in [\[the Desktop Research Report of Poland\]](#)

20. Different Education and Counselling support schemes available for blind and VIP in Poland

There are programmes of individual support for persons with disabilities. E.g. the “Graduate” programme financed by State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons carried out by NGOs (e.g. Polish Association of the Blind) and other entitled institutions (e.g. universities) to provide support and assistance to enter the job market.

The above mentioned programme enables obtaining new or additional qualifications.

NGOs also run programmes to support education and employment of blind and VIP financed by governmental or EU.

21. Various work assistance services for blind and VIP available in Poland

- A. Traineeships for disabled job seekers registered in a local job office, persons with disabilities with no employment (financed by State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons), can participate in paid traineeship the sum of 120% of unemployment benefits, according to art. 2, art. 53. Item 6 Act on promotion of employment and institutions of the labour market ;
- B. Training: for disabled, for registered in the job office unemployed seeking for employment, addressed to persons with disabilities who are unemployed financed by PFRON, training costs cannot exceed the amount 10 times greater than an average salary, no scholarship is paid ;
- C. Financial assistance to set up own company, agricultural activity or social cooperative: unemployed disabled job seekers, financed by State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons) for disabled job seekers, the amount cannot exceed fifteen average salaries, the amount of an average salary is announced by Central Statistical Office;
- D. Employment assistant to help a disabled worker - employers who employ persons with disabilities can receive the amount which cannot exceed 20 % of the total amount of hours calculated on a basis of the full-time work.

Legislations, Policies and Administration

22. Policy maker working for blind and VIP

- The Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People

[You can find more information about the work of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People in the point 2, letter B] and in [\[the Desktop Research Report of Poland\]](#)

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23. Various social security laws and support available for blind and VIP in Poland

- Personal Income Tax Act (tax privileges);
- Regulation of the Minister of Health on guaranteed benefits;
- Regulation on rehabilitation stays;
- Act on social pension;
- The law on old-age and disability pensions;
- Family Benefits Act (all care allowances, care benefits, care allowances);
- Parking card.

24. Various laws and policies available for blind and VIP in the education sector in Poland

- Act on the education system;
- Regulation on Education of disabled children, school layettes, assistant for disabled students.

25. Different legislations, Policies and Administration for blind and VIP Employment in Poland

The Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19971230776>

of 27 August, 1997, particularly article 26, 26A, 26D, 26E, 26G.

26. Legislation and policies available for Assistive Technologies of blind and VIP in Poland

- Accessibility Plus Act

27. Legislation and policies available for personal assistance of blind and VIP in Poland

- Act on Solidarity Fund for Support of the Disabled Persons from 23 October 2018, art. 7 (5) (Dz. U. poz. 2192 oraz z 2019 r. poz. 1622 i 1696) (Journal of Laws item 2192 and from the year 2019 item 1622 and 1696)

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Poland Focus Group: Summary

Job Office Representatives Focus Group Interview Report

Focus Group Interview Carried Out on 28th May 2020

- The focus group interview was related to the employment of the blind and VIP (visually impaired persons).
- Two persons (male and female) representing public employment services participated in this focus group interview. Both participants had an opportunity to interact with blind and VIP at work.
- They esteem their familiarity with blind and VIP as neutral. Interview participants declared they meet visually impaired people once in a year.
- The meeting was a session of broad questions that enabled participants to share their opinion, experience and knowledge.

I. Should the visually-impaired people work at all? Wouldn't it be better if they had pensions good enough and did not have professional activity at all?

Both focus group interview participants agreed that blind and VIP should be able to have their careers. One person stated that employment is essential in rehabilitation, social inclusion and that it mainly concerns all persons with disabilities. However, it has been experienced by this respondent that employers do not want to employ visually impaired people. The ratio of visually impaired people registered at the job office, where this person works, is significantly low.

Another participant concluded that social benefits, persons with disabilities receive, are not the solution of the problem. This person noticed as well that employers do not want to adapt the workstation for the needs of disabled persons.

II. The barriers on the side of employers, including the difficulties, which have to be faced by them, when they want to fulfill the requirements to adapt a workplace for the need of the blind person

To answer this question, one participant reported that this issue concerns persons with different disabilities. This person stated that employers are reluctant to benefit from financial mechanisms to adapt a workplace for persons with disabilities.

One respondent highlighted that complicated procedures are the main obstacle. Employers have to submit monthly reports. The workplace for a person with disability has to be approved by The National Labour Inspectorate. Another barrier is that an employer gets a refund after the costs have been incurred.

One participant reported that the obligation to maintain the workplace for a person with disability for at least three years is the main obstacle. Another person complemented that it is not easy, since each person may require different adaptation.

The list of privileges for employed disabled workers was the next problem introduced by the job office representatives. One person stated that "disabled workers have longer holiday leaves and are allowed to go to the doctor during work time". Another person added that "disabled persons cannot be employed after fixed working hours nor on Saturdays". According to them, it all discourages employers to look for disabled employees.

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The next problem mentioned by both participants is the difficulty to find a strongly motivated disabled employee. One participant pointed out that persons with disabilities often resign from employment and a new potential employee with a disability to replace him/her might need different software or equipment.

“There are disabled people not motivated to work. They only register at the job office to claim for health insurance or other social welfare benefits” – added one job office representative.

Both participants discussed the problem of special needs of visually impaired workers. they agreed that many disabled and visually impaired people would like to work close to their home. To compare, they are of the opinion that people with motor impairment are in the better situation in terms of accessibility of public transport than visually impaired and only the few employers offer transport services for disabled staff to get to work.

One participant said that “employers want to engage independent persons”. On the other hand, another job service representative added that persons with disability demand more time, demand sympathy from the employer, but “for the employer who wants to earn money an employee should be fast, independent, available but not demanding, waiting to be treated in a special way, as it often happens among employees with disabilities.”

According to both focus group interview participants a proper education and accurate work qualifications of persons with disabilities are among major problems from the employers point of view.

One person reported that “there is a small number of professions persons with visual impairment may perform and they have major problems with requalification.”

Another participant added that persons with disabilities seek for office work. Employers seek for people who meet the minimum requirement of secondary education for such job positions. It happens that persons with disabilities often cannot fulfil even this criterion.

III. The third question directed to job office representatives was: What are your views on blind and VIP?

The idea was to find out how visually impaired people are perceived by the job service representatives. Both respondents agreed that the generalisation should be avoided. According to both of them, there are independent disabled persons, whereas others choose to live on social benefits and privileges and each case should be evaluated separately.

Therefore, behaviour and attitude are determined by a number of factors: the way disabled persons have been brought up, the way they perceive their situation themselves, the mentality of the given person. Focus group interview participants reported that at work they met people who applied for financial assistance to start their own businesses that went successful.

According to them some people fight to overcome the difficulties and accept their situation. Also there are people seeking sympathy, who talk constantly about their disability and related problems and that approach discourages potential employers. It is really difficult to provide sufficient assistance for this group of people. One participant added that there are only a few employers he knows who employ people with disabilities, especially with a visual impairment.

There are persons with disabilities who think that employing them brings profits for the employers as they get refunds of their salaries. And if you look at the privileges of the disabled employees, those financial benefits for employers rather serve as a kind of compensation for privileges persons with disabilities are entitled to.

There are also people who do not inform the employer about their disability as they are afraid that this would refrain the employers from employing them. One job office representative said that “to gain maximum refunds entrepreneurs want to employ people with severe disability levels but simultaneously with no real health and performance problems. Most employers offer persons with disabilities minimum wages.”

IV. The fourth question directed to job office representatives was: Are there any specific requirements, specific guidance for the blind and VIP entering the job market?

Both participants agreed that persons with visual impairment should receive proper and adequate assistance.

One person mentioned that “visually impaired people should get assistance in motivation to change, to be active, accept often difficult situations, to leave stagnation and start to act to find employment.”

Another job service representative added that engaging special assistance helping to commute around the city would be of great value and that job office does not offer such service.

Assistance from a careers adviser would also be essential. The job office employs one such adviser who does not have sufficient time to have an individual approach for each person.

Both persons agreed that raising awareness among employers would play an essential role in helping blind and VIP to enter the job market. One person added that organisation of meetings where employers convinced to employ persons with disabilities meet those afraid of that would be helpful. Launching a social campaign promoting employment of persons with disabilities would also be effective. Actions to minimise employers reservations to employ persons with disabilities would also be appreciated.

V. The fifth question directed to job offices representatives was which new jobs they know for the blind and VIP.

Both focus group interview participants mentioned the IT specialists and employees working in call center helpines/info lines. “They can work in IT if they have special software and are trained to do this kind of job” – one of them added.

One of them mentioned as well a sound technician – as a new job profile for the blind.

One of them said and the other focus group interview participant agreed, that they, as job office representatives, would really appreciate it to be informed about the new job opportunities, new professions visually impaired may perform. They say there is a need “especially for those with low qualifications who cannot be employed as security of cleaning staff, jobs usually being performed by people with low qualifications”.

They both agreed as well that it is commonly believed that a blind person can do office work or be a massage therapist. “Massage therapists must often have sufficient work experience and degree in higher education and that requirement prevents many people from finding employment.” – one of them added.

One of the participants said that in 2019, the job office had only two job offers for visually impaired in companies supplying equipment for blind and VIP.

VI. What can be done to boost employment of the visually impaired?

One participant said that “social campaigns addressed to employers and better conditions to employ blind and low vision would be helpful.”

The second focus group interview participants was of the opinion that “cooperation with foundations working for the visually impaired would be beneficial. In this case, foundations would seek for persons whereas job offices would finance necessary equipment / adaptation. There is no individual approach for persons with disabilities as only the few of them are registered.”

They both complained about their working conditions, decreased staff and increased number of duties – it does not help them in offering an individual approach to their clients. “The job office has the same approach for everyone that, from the psychological point of view, might be a positive factor” – added one of the job office representatives.

[\[Please see the Report on Focus Group with Employers and Labor Services Operators in Poland for more information on the Labor Services Operators in Poland Focus Group\]](#)

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Employers Focus Group Interview Report: Poland

Focus Group Interview Carried Out on 27th May 2020

Four employers took part in the interview on 27th May 2020 at the headquarters of the Polish Association on the Blind, Warsaw, 9, Konwiktorska Street.

- The focus interview was related to the employment of the blind and VIP (visually-impaired people).
- All four focus group participants had already interacted with blind and partially sighted people.
- All of them (four people) interacted with blind and VIP in the work environment, two of them (half of the group) interacted with blind and VIP in education, and one of them interacted with blind and VIP in Support Schemes.
- All of them say they know blind and VIP: two of them say they are familiar with blind and VIP at the high level, two of them confirm this level to be very high.
- All of them (four people) confirm that they meet blind and VIP daily.
- The employers were asked the questions about their views and opinions related to the employment of the blind and VIP.

I. Should the visually-impaired people work at all? Wouldn't it be better if they had pensions good enough and did not have professional activity at all?

All employers (four people) agreed that people with visual impairment should have the possibility to do a professional job. According to the employers it all depends on the qualifications (three employers), education level (three employers) and interpersonal skills (four employers). What counts it is not only the vocational predispositions, but also those which are related to the basic rehabilitation (three employers).

“One has to be able to get to work, interact with other people and be able to manage the work technically,” said one employer.

One employer, invoking his experience listed the professions, expressed an opinion that blind and visually-impaired people are fit as: “Masseurs, who work in the hotels, in Spa; psychologists with visual impairment. They have a lot of empathy and understanding for other people with the visual impairment in need of therapy.

Blind people also prove themselves as teachers of new technologies and IT specialists.”

Another employer added that “in the past there were indicated professions that blind people were able to practice. Nowadays, thanks to new technologies we could rather draft a catalogue of professions that blind people could not practice, such as drivers or surgeons. Other professions, with the use of the appropriate technologies and equipment, are accessible to the blind. We can speak as well about partial execution of certain things belonging to certain professions.”

One of the employers expressed an opinion that there are many reasons for a low level of employment of blind people in Poland in comparison to other types of disability.

„The most important in it is the blind or visually-impaired person himself/herself. The population of the people with the visual impairment is varied, regarding the age, vision or education level; there is no homogeneity,” the employer said.

According to one employer, in the past work done by the visually-impaired people had a role of occupational therapy, there was no need for the results of it, for the profit. Today the profit should be on the side of the employer as well as on the side of the employee.

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„Due to the marginalization of the role of vocational education in the education system in Poland, many people do not have concrete skills, as they graduate high schools or university studies.

The access should be given to various positions. A particular blind or partially sighted person should be followed: who she/he is, what her/his education is, what her/his resources useful for the job market are,” said one of the employers.

“A person with a visual impairment who wants to work has to be able to execute daily living skills,” added the same employer.

„The employers are discouraged the most by low social competences of the blind and VIP: lack of skills related to be among sighted people, lack of civility, courage, lack of understanding of certain norms, lack of capacity to ask and fight for herself/himself in a compromising and not a demanding way. People with a visual impairment very often are afraid of change, they have problems with expressing themselves, they do not smile, they lack spontaneity,” said an employer.

One of the employers said: “what counts is the personality of the person with the visual impairment, the capacity to socialize, to start a conversation, to wear proper clothes. The essential role is played by the level of rehabilitation and of independence”.

Two employers mentioned the fact that the social benefits very often lead the people with disabilities to remain inactive professionally.

II. The barriers on the side of employers, including the difficulties, which have to be faced by them, when they want to fulfill the requirements to adapt a workplace for the need of the blind person

The answers to this second large question given by employers can be divided into six groups, which are:

A. Computer programs and marking the rooms

Two out of four employers answered the question above, that the main problem is how to mark the rooms to be accessible for the blind.

Two out of four employers said that the main problem is the computer programs which are used in the companies and which are not accessible for the visually-impaired people.

One employer said that “a blind person would need the help of an assistant, who would enter the data into the system for him/her or would read information for him/her.”

B. Fears, concerns and stereotypes

Three out of four employers mentioned fear and various concerns of employers. They are related e.g. to the question if an employer who never employed blind people is able to do it and how a blind person will be received by the team.

On the side of the team there is a concern that all of them will have extra work that they will have to help blind people or even do the job for him/her.

One of the employers called it “a fear of the unknown”.

“Employers on the open market do not know how to organize work of the visually-impaired person,” added one employer.

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The employer, a Chief of a Rehabilitation Center, mentioned that employers are afraid of being responsible for the health and security of the visually-impaired person. This employer added that there is a stereotype that a disabled person is ill, therefore she/he will often be out of job or on sick leave.

One of the employers, a representative of the administration area, said that the information about the bad experience of some employers, concerning the employment of the disabled or visually-impaired people discourage other employers potentially interested in employing visually-impaired people.

One of the employers also mentioned the fear of what can happen if a disabled employee is not good at work.

“If the employment of the disabled people is well perceived, the dismissal of such employees can be very badly perceived. The employer is blamed for the situation; he/she has to justify her/his decision. Very often it becomes a big media case, even if the employee just does not have the capacity to do the given job or is a lazy person,” said one employer.

C. The lack of knowledge among employers

One of the employers mentioned the lack of knowledge among employers concerning the possibility to obtain the financing (refund) for the workplace of a disabled person.

Another employer mentioned the lack of detailed knowledge among employers concerning the so-called universal accessibility. On the other hand, this accessibility is diverse, demands various actions, in the case of the visually-impaired person they depend on the level and type of the disability, and this variety can as well discourage the employer.

D. The unwillingness to adapt the workplace to the needs of the visually-impaired person.

Employers widely discussed this matter. They approached many aspects of the workplace adaptation to the needs of the visually-impaired person.

One of the employers mentioned that in big companies there are paths which apply to every newly employed worker and that the companies do not want to change them respecting the needs of the visually-impaired person. The problem lies in differences resulting e.g. from the Labour Code: a different work time, a different length of the annual leave for a person with disability.

It can be difficult and time-consuming for the employer to create tasks for the visually impaired person i.e. tasks that can be done considering the workplace adaptation.

“Some tasks can turn out to be impossible. Nevertheless the effort has been put into the workplace adaptation and this causes frustration,” mentioned another employer.

Another problem mentioned by (two) employers stems from complicated procedures to be followed for obtaining the financing as well as from the salaries. In the case of a blind person workplace adaptation is very difficult and therefore employers are discouraged from taking any action in this area.

One of the employers mentioned that in his opinion “generally speaking, employers do not want to work on disabled person workplace adaptation because very often it is for only one or two people in the company.”

One of the employers suggested that the procedures related to the disabled person workplace adaptation should be possible in the electronic way.

According to all (four employers) a barrier in the employment of the visually-impaired people is the obligation to keep the workplace for three years, if the employer had the refund for the workplace adaptation under pain of paying back the whole received amount. "The given employee, for whose workplace the refund was obtained, may not be good for the job and a person employed to replace her/him may have totally different needs and need a different workplace adaptation," specified one employer.

"Moreover, the financing is based on the refund of costs incurred and the procedure of the refund takes about half a year, so it is discouraging. The employer is subject to many inspections, which are not only about one particular workplace; the employer is put on watch," added one employer.

"This law does not reflect reality. It works against the blind; nowadays employers do not employ people for the period of three years. Employers become hostage to such employees," said an employer heading a non-governmental organization.

One of the employers suggested that this law should change. The period should be reduced to 12 months.

E. *Non-standard working time of people with disabilities.*

All employers (four people) agreed that the shorter workweek of the people with visual impairment is an inconvenience while organizing team work, e.g. a person with disability cannot replace another full-time employee.

"The law which guarantees additional leave for people with disabilities works as well to the disadvantage of the blind people," added one employer.

F. Costs

One of the employers said that generally employers do not want to bear the additional costs related to the employment of the visually impaired person, e.g. the whole IT system adaptation costs for the needs of one blind employee.

III. What are your views on blind and VIP?

Only two employers (half of the group) shared their views on blind and VIP.

"Many blind and visually impaired people have low levels of competence and low interpersonal skills" – said one of them.

„A topic is so broad. As for the professional view: educated, but it does not always go hand in hand with the social skills, with basic rehabilitation. By the way, they are such a diverse age group, there are people who lost their sight at different times in their lives, some were born blind, some became blind in adolescence, adulthood and the elderly people. There are people who see nothing, there are also those who have kept trace, sometimes significant, remains of sight. There are talented and average people, educated and without education, the righteous and those who try to meet their needs in a way that is not necessarily honest“ – added another employer.

IV. Are there any specific requirements, specific guidance for the blind and VIP entering the job market?

Only one of the employers said that what matters is if people with visual impairment want to work or not and if they want to enter the job market, there is nothing specific for them regarding their visual impairment.

Two employers (half of the group) mentioned that the removal of the need to suspend the pension while achieving a certain level of income would be an incentive for the visually-impaired people to work.

One employer said that employment agencies are not prepared to give support to the clients with disability; they do not take into consideration their specific needs.

Two employers (half of the group) mentioned the need for specific guidance: one mentioned training courses leading to independence; another mentioned the need for social skills training, training in the interpersonal skills and even a psychotherapy, if necessary.

“A visually-impaired person should be conscious of her/his deficiencies, such as low self-esteem, lack of capacity to control her/his own mimics, lack of spontaneity and should have a possibility to work on it,” added one of the employers.

V. New jobs for the blind and VIP

One of the employers listed the new professions given below:

- researcher,
- services of the type “blind for blind” – people who manage well, who have good rehabilitation skills share their skills with others in need, e.g. they teach the use of the smartphone or other equipment, they give the guidance and motivate the others to make an effort,
- info line service,
- telemarketing
- a distant customer satisfaction survey,
- support jobs, not a full-time job.

Another employer listed two new professions:

- professional listener,
- professions related to tasting, e.g. sommelier.

All employers taking part in this focus interview (four people) agreed that nowadays there is a lack of job profiles for the blind and VIP who have lower qualifications, who have lower intellectual level.

Italy Desktop Research: Summary

Preface

This paper summarizes the material included in the larger desktop-research-IRIFOR. For the sake of better readability I decided to add an appendix, which includes working materials, such as questionnaires, long excerpts from relevant laws, videos showing best practices. This solution should facilitate consultation of the paper, according to different usages / interests of the reader.

INTRODUCTION

RADAR's main goals

RADAR faces the issues related to the increasing of unemployed blind/VIP in EU, acting directly on 2 of the main actors engaged with the approaching and job-placing process for VIP:

1) Employers; 2) public or private Operators in charge of Employment and Job-Application Services.

This paper is the first intellectual output, as planned in RADAR project.

This paper has been composed in view of possible distribution to:

- blind and partially sighted persons who are interested in finding a new job and/or in helping other VIP to find a new job or a job more satisfactory according to their expectations;
- educators, teachers, school assistants, rehabilitation centers;
- employers
- policy makers in the domain of work services, as well as in education services, welfare.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Main sources for this paper are following:

- live experience as person with visual impairment, as teacher of sighted teachers, as president of Florence branch of Italian Union of the Blind and Visually Impaired;
- publications dealing with new job opportunities;
- newsletters & press release;
- proceedings of conventions & conferences;
- audiovisual material;
- available official statistics.
- Reference to resources are to be found along with corresponding topics.
- Figures and narrations in combination should contribute to convey a more realistic idea of the complexity of the problem we are dealing with, in its various aspects, including contradictions, strong as well as critical points.

Methodology

In view of offering a more realistic description of the different aspects and of their connections to each other, I prefer to use a method which tries to balance general concepts, discussion, factual / statistical data, laws & regulations.

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Some general considerations

The problem we are going to tackle can be classified as a "complex" problem. The concept of complexity refers to an object / process / situation which consist of a significant number of factors and variables which are connected between each other. Example: good technology promotes freedom in choosing information sources; or: familiarity with changes and good success in dealing with changes have a positive impact on the problem-solving ability; etc. Following the above-mentioned general considerations, in composing this paper, I preferred to deal with several important topics in one and the same paragraph, for the sake of better readability and easier grasping of the problem we are going to discuss. Example: the paragraph devoted to education will refer to main laws and regulations concerning this specific sector. While dealing with legislation, I will mention changes in attitudes towards blindness and blind persons, so as to make it more clear the mutual influence between cultural aspects and legal measures / obligations.

WORK & HUMAN VALUES

All societies model their organizations, their private and public habits according to a certain scale of values, which on turn change under the effect of external factors / circumstances, such as wars, climate, technological developments. In our case, that is work opportunities for VIP, Ideas, points of views, and consequently laws and regulations, policies, are significantly influenced by the prevalent views about work in general and, specifically, about blind and blindness.

Therefore, I would like to introduce this paper with an overview of the history of emancipation of the blind in the last 120 years; at the same time, I will try to highlight the main changes affecting views and ideas about blind and blindness by educators, policy makers, legislators. In fact, laws and regulations concerning VIP at work, as well as the organization of related services, are in close connection with the level and the quality of awareness about blindness and VIPs.

We should always keep in mind though that different and often even contrasting ideas and views, as well as different levels of awareness about blindness and the blind coexist in the same community and in the same period of time. In other words, in Italy, like maybe everywhere else, there are different and even contradictory attitudes towards the blind, which coexist: *a) blind = totally dependent; b) on the contrary, blind = with many more abilities and tricks than expected.*

Literacy the dawn of the emancipation

In the common awareness, in Italy perhaps more than in northern European Countries, blindness is associated with ancient fears, self-helplessness, castration (Oedipus), absence of feelings, mental disability. On the other hand, the blind person is supposed to be endowed with special powers, which indeed are desirable, but not really desired, such as ability to see the future, ability to guide souls through the world of the dead, special musical gifts. We are not sure whether Homeruns existed, but everybody knows for sure that he was blind.

Blindness is considered as a different world, and is associated with unpleasant and unexpected situations / feelings. e.g. [our competitor's) luck, (improper) love, are all blind.

Although we find several excellences as musicians, or in the domain of scientific studies - Nicholas Saunderson (XVIII century) worked as assistant at Cambridge University's mathematics department) immediately after Newton, the majority of the blind earned their life begging at churches' doors, and only a few worked as craftsmen.

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Braille = a vision of life

UN convention on persons with disabilities mention Braille among other languages; almost everybody knows that blind persons can have access to personal and direct writing / reading through Braille, which is based on the sense of touch, in particular on the fingertip of the index of the dominant hand.

For the scope of our research, though, it is worth while pointing out some general principles and practical implications, which are directly connected with Braille.

1)Turning an accident into an opportunity. The human history has many examples of the ability to draw benefit from an unpleasant or tragic circumstance. Using the violence of water / wind in order to obtain useful energy; using poisonous plants for healing, etc. Louis Braille lost his sight when he was 3 (1812); the first writing tool for Braille is exactly a stylus.

2)Keeping common goals and changing strategies. Tactile reading is much slower than visual reading. Still tactile and visual reading have many common points – flexibility in speed and type of access (linear reading, browsing, skimming), building a spatial map of the text, possibility to switch from details to overview etc.

3)Valuing what we have, rather than grumbling about for we miss;

Last but not least, Louis Braille had the mental acuity to separate goals and means. In particular, all previous attempts to educate blind persons gave for axiomatic that the problem was how to reproduce visual letters, so that the blind person could feel them using his finger. Braille changed the starting point, and asked himself how he could represent common letters and every other symbol considering strong and weak points of the sense of touch. The solution is a new tactile alphabet, or rather a new notation, consisting of 64 dot combinations, and a system of rules which avoids any misunderstanding or confusion in interpretation.

Braille⁷ is a universal alphabet, and gives the possibility to represent all alphabets, including classical languages – Latin, Greek, Hebrew – non-Latin alphabets, ideographical notations (through transliteration), scientific texts and music scores⁸.

All population draw benefit from literacy, in terms of emancipation, capability to represent themselves, possibility to improve the feeling of belonging to a community, but above all, development of communication and mental skills, such as independent thinking, reasoning, creativeness, sharing ideas, lobbying. One of the most negative consequences of blindness is isolation and difficulty in learning (visual imitation is not possible). Consequently, word becomes one of the main keys to acquire knowledge, which however should be directly or indirectly connected to live experience. Braille is still the more effective tool allowing autonomous reading and writing, comparable to visual reading.

Mutual help and the Italian Union of the Blind

World War 1, with its millions of victims and invalids, was determinant for the birth of the Italian Union of the Blind, founded in 1920 by Aurelio Nicolodi, a wealthy young official of the Italian army, who in 1915 lost his sight when he was only 20. Nicolodi, after a short period of rehabilitation in Florence,

⁷ <https://www.perkins.org/international/about/world-braille-usage>

⁸ <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1buP4QULhODfU7FNvaSkHv2TYvtzSdi2u>

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devoted his life to the blind, no matter whether war blind or civil blind, and this was the first strong point of his battle. Nicolodi, in his 30 years of activity, put in foreground 3 main goals:

a) emancipation, that is to be acknowledged and to perceive oneself as "man among men", as he used to say, that is "person among persons", or "citizen among citizens", as we would say today. Blindness started to be considered no longer the main characteristic of the person, but just an undesirable condition;

b) education in broader sense, that is literacy, physical training & body awareness, mental skills, will characteristics (endurance, resistance to frustrations, steadiness, order in thinking and in everyday life, generosity and readiness to help, mobility, social skills, aesthetic education, imagery & creativeness. We will often recall this vision of education, and we will use the expression **"overall education"**;

c) work as means of sustenance, and as a way towards a positive image of oneself and for others. Work therefore is to be considered only one of the aspects of the path towards full emancipation of the blind person.

Nicolodi created 3 main institutions:

1) National vocational school for the blind (massage), which included a Braille press for the production of text books, scientific books and music scores for all Italian schools;

2) National guide dog school for independent life;

3) national workshop for the blind, with departments in Florence, Rome and Naples, for the production of shoes, brushes, baskets and wool knitwear. 70% of the workers had to be blind, for the sake of integration. The Italian Government reserved 12% of military equipment of this kind to assigned to Nicolodi's workshops. The National workshop for the blind closed soon after switchboard operators started to find a job.

In the same years, Augusto Romagnoli, a blind educator, introduced an innovative and effective education system, based on the new achievements by Maria Montessori, as well as of the "active school" (Freinet and Piaget). In a few years Italy had 12 educational centers for children, whose syllabus was based on practical learning, physical training, manual activities including clay and raised drawing, and recreative activities as means for developing better body awareness, as well as mental skills, practical skills and creativity.

It must be considered here that until the beginning of 19th century, even conventions on the education of the blind, where sighted educators discussed about improvements to be introduced, were not opened to the blind. The old stereotype which considered blindness as mental disease, was still alive. Before Romagnoli's activity, institutes for the blind were a kind of hospices from birth to grave.

Until the introduction of the new integrated school (1977), we had in Italy special schools for elementary and middle education (6 to 14 years), vocational training for telephone operators and for masseurs, and the possibility to attend to normal high schools including university. Music studies have really flourished in Italy, until end of '70s, when there were about 700 active blind music teachers.

Thanks to Romagnoli and Nicolodi the blind became valid interlocutors of national and local Authorities, in relationship with all main issues connected to their private and public life, such as

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education, vocational training, financial provisions. This step forward corresponds to the trend towards self representativity. Before that time the needs of the blind were represented and sponsored by sighted persons. Nicolodi and Romagnoli created a real lobby, and offered the opportunity to all Italian blind to perceive themselves as capable of representing their rights, their points of view, their expectations. On the other hand, national and local Authorities start to think of a blind person as a person who was in the condition to speak for himself.

It must be considered here that only in 1975 the Italian Parliament recognized the validity of the signature by a blind citizen.⁹

STATISTICS

Statistics are certainly very useful in order to attain best possible knowledge about a situation, a particular group (as in our case), a certain phenomenon. Still numbers often are not exhaustive, so we can integrate statistical data with descriptions and other demonstrative material.

Quality of sight

Between seeing and not seeing: Understanding the quality of sight.0020

If the reader will have a look at the above mentioned video, it will be more clear how complex and delicate is vision assessment, and consequently how complex is to design and to implement effective solutions - services, accessible material, navigable physical environments.

In fact, the quality of human vision depends on more than 10 important parameters, such as: visual acuity or visus, visual field (measured in degree of a circumference - normal about 180°, colour sensitivity, trailing, adjustment to different lightening levels, stability of the image (Nystagmus), etc. Considering the fact that statistical data are generally recorded for administrative / financial purposes (totally blind are entitled to receive the so-called "guide indemnity), in Italy we have different results, according to the scope of a given statistic.

Thus, the **national institute for social security (INPS) reports:**

- population 60.589.445
- blind 116.932 (1.99%)

This esteem is based on money contribution, which in Italy goes to totally blind (no visus) and to partially blind persons (Visus not more than 1/20 and / or visual field not greater than 3% (see Law 138/2001).

We should point out here that, while our national insurance institute keeps record of totally blind (visual acuity less than 1/20 and / or visual field less than 3%), regulations on employment include also what we define "severe visually impaired persons", that is visus not greater than 1/10.

This circumstance makes it difficult to work on homogeneous data.

WHO reports:

Globally the number of people of all ages visually impaired is estimated to be 285 million, of whom 39 million are blind. People 50 years and older are 82% of all blind.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/blindness-and-visual-impairment>

⁹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BFZZUTN4t1RwT5z9-o2Jt1Yavadr3Fyt/view?usp=sharing>

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Wikipedia reports:

According to WHO (2007) there are 314 millions persons with severe visual impairment, of which 45 millions are blind, 269 millions with a visual impairment. Other sources though report that in Italy there are at least 380.000, while persons with a visual impairment are estimated to be 5 times that number.

<https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecit%C3%A0>

Blind & work in figures

The Italian Union of the blind reports 2% of the Italian population affected by a visual impairment, 75% of which are over 65. 4% are totally blind (about 40.000 to 45.000), 2% multihandicapped, and the rest partially sighted. With regard to people who are at work or are looking for a job, the attached tables can be considered a good basis for a more detailed analysis. The above-mentioned tables are dated 2017, and they are based on spontaneous responses coming from the peripheral offices of the Italian Union of the Blind. (see appendix table01 to table04).

The following three abstracts, reporting the meeting organized in Naples (June 2015) reflects live experience and level of apprehension of the Italian Union of the visually impaired.

Source: Giornale UICI

http://www.uiciechi.it/servizi/riviste/TestoRiv.asp?id_art=17761

Title: Il lavoro fa per me

WORK IS FOR ME!

Author: Mario Barbuto – National president of the Italian Union of Visually Impaired (UICI)

Abstract

Work is first of all the pathway towards emancipation. Visually impaired persons have the right to express their potentialities through work. The time of begging is over! Work promotes self-esteem and promotes a more realistic attitude towards blindness, which, although a very undesirable condition, leaves many possibilities if only the right help in terms of regulations, cultural attitude, technologies are available in practice and not only in laws. UN convention's motto is "nothing about us without us". Let us add "nothing between us without unity"!¹⁰

Source: <http://giornale.uici.it/il-lavoro-fa-per-me-il-futuro-inizia-dal-lavoro-politiche-di-inclusione-lavorativa-delle-persone-con-disabilita-tra-criticita-di-oggi-e-prospettive-di-domani/>

Title: WORK IS FOR ME! Future starts with work! Inclusive policies for persons with disabilities between today's critic points and tomorrows's perspectives.

Author: Paolo Colombo

Abstract

We are facing a historical change, and only networking between all policy makers and associations for and of persons with disabilities, trade unions and association of employers can win a battle that is first of all for equal opportunities. Solidarity is not only an ethical principle, but in this case is the wisest possible solution aiming at valuing potentialities of the human person. ¹¹

Source: Corriere dei Ciechi, 2015, nr. 7-8

Title: WORK IS FOR ME! Il lavoro fa per me!

Author: Ida Palisi

http://www.uiciechi.it/servizi/riviste/TestoRiv.asp?id_art=17761

¹⁰ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VjBiGE0KeH01Dz5IUwWq0RjTt--Xvnuh/view?usp=sharing>

¹¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JKnmMS53yBNz4CB_ZRgWbAy6IERyYOA1/view?usp=sharing

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Abstract

For 2012 our Labour Ministry reports over 75% of visually impaired who are unoccupied, or waiting for a job.

Need for more effective laws; need for practical application of existing regulations; need for new regulations which consider recent development in technologies and which value the potentialities of persons with visual impairment, implementing permanent training / updating of their knowledge and abilities.¹²

Blind & education

In the past century, up to 1950's, In Italy blind students were normally accepted by high schools. They generally had a "personal reader", who acted not as a teacher, but as an intelligent "secretary", "assistant", who "lent" his eyes to the student. At that time methods and learning materials were based mainly on written word. Blind students used Braille for personal writings, they had Braille books from Braille printers (classical texts), or personal notes, or materials which had been copied either by a parent, or by the assistant.

This solution was possible for relatively wealthy families, or where Local Authorities were more sensible towards the opportunity to study without abandoning one's family, which, in our culture, at that time, was very important. Augusto Romagnoli, as above mentioned, reformed the education of the blind, and transformed old institutes / hospices into educational structures, that is schools with appropriate and trained teachers, specific tyflodidactical equipment and adequate syllabus. The introduction of the integration model (1977), had as main consequence the fact that visually impaired students were enrolled in normal schools, near their families.

Some figures:

At present our support center follow about 3000 students, from nursery up to high schools. Universities have special tutoring services for students with disabilities.

About 25% of the 3000 above mentioned students are totally blind; 45% are partially sighted (up to 3/10 of the normal visual acuity and / or with other relevant visual defects), and 30% are multihandicapped students.

Regulations on school integration offer the possibility to personalize the school curriculum, in accordance with limits and potentialities of each student.

STAKEHOLDERS

Institutions / organizations working for the blind and VIPs

Considering the fact that visual disability affects all spheres of the individual, e.g. private & public life), different private and public institutions / organizations deal with problems related to blindness and work opportunities. Their action can affect directly or indirectly the common awareness about relevant topics related with the scope of this paper, and consequently can have an effect on solutions to adopt and/ or on the organization of related services. Here the most relevant stakeholders, which should be considered both as possible target for communication and as valid interlocutors. The Italian Union of the blind and visually impaired (UICI) maintains constant relationships with all organizations / Authorities listed below, either directly or through the various international networks, such as e European Blind Union (EBU) and the World Blind Union (WBU).

¹² <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Sz1Wm8NwENTCtXOEMQYKQfOjzip7k48A/view?usp=sharing>

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Relevant sectors:

1. *Finances;*
2. *Education;*
3. *Welfare;*
4. *Labor;*
5. *Health;*
6. *Research;*
7. *Civil rights & non discrimination;*
8. *Organization of public services (transportation, architectonic and sensory barriers, accessibility and usability of services and technologies);*
9. *Information & communication;*
10. *Tourism and sport;*

Below a list of main stakeholders

International level

- European Commission;
- European Parliament;

National level

- Parliament;
- Ministries;

Regional level

- Respective departments;

Local level

- Local Authorities;

Private organizations

It must be considered that generally in Italy, like in all European countries, important laws and/or political options / decisions derive from a process of confrontation of different ideas, views, proposals coming from many relevant social layers / groups. In our cases, the main actors of this process are:

- Trade unions;
- Employers and their associations (in the domain of industry, handicraft, trade, tourism, etc.);
- The so-called Third Sector. - in Italy, like in many European countries, and particularly in Tuscany, traditionally a certain number of volunteers, deriving from religious organizations as well as from lay philanthropic companies / associations.

Educators

As pointed out in our introduction, the ability to carry on a job in an effective way, especially in our modern technological society, depends on a good education, that is development of all potentialities of the individual, including practical skills, mental skills, social skills, imaginative and creative

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capabilities. Be it once more underlined the fact that, with regard to blind individuals, the learning process cannot be based on visual imitation, but it must be guided and fostered by prepared operators, starting from early childhood; we should never forget that the visually impaired child grows up within a human environment (family) which on turn should be well aware of its delicate tasks, aiming at valuing existing potentialities, rather than avoiding any effort for the “poor little blind child”. Any growth requires some efforts; in the case of the visually impaired child, the educator / parent has to guide it in order to develop what is left, that is touch, hearing, motion, mental skills (Integral Education).

Educators therefore play a determinant role, starting from what we call "early intervention" (that is helping families and the child since early age, to cope with the visual disability).

Unfortunately, there are too few prepared educators, as pointed out in the paragraph devoted to education. Here we can say that all educators operating at school, including school assistants, counselors for families, can have a relevant importance in view of the global development of the individual. In this framework, "self-empowerment" can adequately summarize the idea of an Integral Education.

Traditional employers

Official figures report that in 2017 public workers in Italy were 16% of the total of employees. The Public Administration, thanks to some protective laws, employs the majority of visually impaired persons as switchboard operators masseurs and physiotherapists and teachers. Other main traditional employers, at least until a few years ago were banks, companies / factories with several hundreds of employees. It must be pointed out that Italy's economy is mainly based on manufacture industry, tourism and handicraft, with a minor number of large businesses / factories.

National Statistic Institute reports for 2017 as follows

Big factories (over 250 employees) are 0,1% of the total number of factories and the total number of workers in this sector amounts to 20,6% of the working population.

Those big companies, located mainly in Northern Italy, since the beginning of '2000's have tried to value visually impaired staff, both by introducing new technologies, and by significant modifications concerning mansions and tasks. More recently, in many of those companies has been created a specific work group devoted to equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. This seems really a good starting point, keeping in mind that, as above mentioned, the number of those virtuous companies is very small.

End users

The most representative organization of end users is named "italian Union of the blind and the visually impaired". Founded in 1920, the "union Italian Ciechi e Ipovedenti", has a national office, 20 regional branches and 107 local offices.

- Its statutory act defines scopes and mission, including representation of moral and material interests of persons with visual impairment (from totally blind to severe visual impairment), as well as different domains - health, education, work, leisure, research & rehabilitation, prevention;
- is acknowledged as main interlocutor on issues concerning visual impairment at national and local level;
- belongs to the so-called "third sector", which includes all non lucrative associations whose scope are considered of public interest;
- at present is the leader association of the European Blind Union", and is affiliated to the World Blind Union";

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- has founded the Italian section of the International Agency of Prevention of Blindness (IAPB 1987);
- has about 40 thousands affiliates, and its leaders, all on voluntary basis, are periodically elected by local and regional groups.

Other organizations

In 100 years of life UICI has created some very important organizations and services, from the end of 'h80s some of them have been taken up by Tuscany Region All those organizations & services work in mutual cooperation. Here below the most representative examples of other kind of local, regional and national organizations working as stakeholders for employability and training of blind and visually impaired people:

- Institute for Research, vocational training, Rehabilitation (I.Ri.Fo.R.)**, funded 1995, of which IRIFOR Toscana is the Tuscany regional branch. IRIFOR has been involved in several European projects; has been organizing vocational courses for switchboard operators; is responsible for the production of Braille school textbooks in cooperation with Tuscany Braille printing house; lastly, in cooperation with Fiesole Lions club has realized 2 courses for holistic massage; cooperates with Careggi hospital in the management of the "Carlo Monti" regional low vision center (see below); has organized short courses addressed to some well known museums, centered on accessibility of artistic heritage; is involved in a few research projects aiming at improving accessibility in different domains (mobility, commercial centers).
- Italian Section of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)** (see www.iapb.it);
- Carlo Monti Low Vision Center** - Located at Careggi hospital, is directed by Prof. Gianni Virgili, ophthalmologist. A multidisciplinary team (6 specialists), deal with an average of 650 patients each years of all ages. Specialists are: psychologist for 0 to 18, psychologist for adults, psychomotor operator for children, orthoptician, specialist in Orientation & Mobility, specialist in personal care skills, specialist for IT for the blind and for the partially sighted. Our team operates both at the low vision center, and at the patient's home / workplace / school. Our specialists participate to meetings devoted to education planning, offering special support and advices to teachers, social workers, students and their families, concerning learning devices, special methodologies and existing opportunities / services. Patients can access the center for advices, aid prescription, support. The team produces an individual plan with objectives, milestones, expected results, which are shared with patients or their family. This kind of service can be accessed whenever needed, that is, normally in case of significant changes in the patient's life;
- Low vision center Pisa** analogous to the previous one;
- Low vision center Siena**, which has been newly created.
- Regional support center for educational and didactical counselling**. This center has only 2 staff; it depends from the italian library for the blind (Monza), which, besides production of customized textbooks in Braille, large print and in digital version, has set up 12 local counselling centers, whose mission is to support schools and family in implementing school integration;
- National guide dog school**, now financed and run by Tuscany Region, which is responsible for training and delivering guide dogs to blind persons from all Italy (25 guide dog each year).
- Talking book service**, with its professional staff and it voice volunteers. The center records in DAISY format also school books. It is free of charge and is devoted to all persons with difficulties in accessing normal texts in print, e.g. dyslexic, spastic, and the likes.

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h) **National federation of institutes for the blind**, who has one of the most important production center for tactile images.

The Italian Union of the Blind therefore is the main interlocutor for our research, and IRIFOR is closely connected with its mother organization.

Labor services

In Italy we have a national Agency for Work, which has regional branches, and a certain number of private agencies. Their mission is to find the right man for the right place. Their activity consists in assessing skills, risks, potentialities of persons looking for a job, help them to better understand their chances, help employers to find the right person. In our case work services: *a)* maintain register of persons entitled to draw benefit from existing provisions, *b)* help the visual impaired person to find a job; *c)* when necessary send a tutor to help the worker and the employer, for example in case of significant changes in of tasks / roles. In Tuscany generally those public services are very cooperative and, up to a few years ago, all candidates have been employed, including a significant number coming from outside Tuscany. The Italian Union of Blind works in close connection with those agencies and is member of the permanent committee for employment, together with administrators, representatives of employers and trade unions.

Views and Ideas about blindness in Italy

Summarizing what has already been explained in the introduction, in Italy, especially after the introduction of school integration, even considering its relevant critical aspects, the level of awareness about blindness and blind persons has slowly improved. Still, especially in certain areas or among certain social groups - not necessarily the less educated persons - we can still observe a *charitable* attitude, or a "rescue" behaviour. But, more and more, people, especially younger generations, appear more open-minded and more open to abandon good old habits and to "get involved", trying to help the blind person the right way, rather than to avoid them.

It should be mentioned here that inclusion, rather than a fact, is to be considered a process, that is a continuous attempt to meet the other person, to share problems and solutions. My experience, as leader of the Florence branch of the Italian Union of the Blind and Visually Impaired persons tells me that also blind persons need to be helped in order to choose the option "rather than swear at darkness, better lit a candle! ", thus, for example, do their best at school, at work, at ameliorating their skills - O&M, personal skills; in other words leave aside their problem for a moment, and try to understand the intention of the occasional helper, and, rather than scolding him / her for an incorrect behaviour, sometimes a clear and soft explanation about the right help might be the best solution for both. A good example might be the short video, not like that, but like this:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUI-M02agaY&feature=emb_title

Traditional jobs

in Italy, like in many other countries, also thanks to some protective laws, we have tried to value what is left. So, according to the current status of the labor market or of the technology, and, by implementing good education and training, we tried to put the right man on the right place.

Since the second half of 1900, up to the first decade of this century, we had the majority of blind working as:

- teachers, including music teachers;
- masseurs (since 1924), when the art of massage was an exclusive field for blind masseurs;
- sellers of lottery tickets.

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Starting from 1950 as switchboard operators, and beginning 2000's we had about 7000 switchboard operators. After 1980 we started training computer programmers, in cooperation with IBM, and about 50 blind programmers found a job. Since 2005 2010, new automatic VOIP technologies started to be massively adopted also in Italy. As a reaction, some of the major organizations, e.g. Bank of Italy, Credit Bank, St. Paul Institute, and others, started changing tasks and mansions of their visually impaired switch operators; some of them started working in public relationships, some in credit recovering, others in staff control, depending on local agreements and, of course, on the ability of the VIP worker to adjust his / her skills to new challenges.

Training has followed analogous evolutions. We used to have courses for switchboard operators with dozens of students who could find a job only some months after their certificate. Likewise, masseurs could start working with three-year course after compulsory school. The reformation of legislation concerning medical professions obliged every physiotherapist to obtain a university 3-year degree.

As already mentioned, switchboard are being overcome by new technologies. Consequently, traditional training has lost its importance.

Summarizing this short paragraph, our experience, by the way in accordance with recent studies in this sector, show us that a growing number of professions *a)* change much faster than in past years; *b)* require not only manual skills, but more and more mental skills; *c)* that the single employee has to possess good adjustment capacities, and **self empowerment**. Lifelong education is certainly the right framework to take into account, considering the fact that changes are one of the most certain factor of our society.

Emerging Jobs

The following data have been extracted from the above mentioned tables (see appendix table 1 to 4).

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATOR (generic)
PUBLIC EMPLOYEE
FREELANCER
WORKMAN
COUNSELLOR
IT INGENEER
LAWYER
COMPUTER PROGRAMMERPROGRAMMATORE
PSYCHOLOGIST
MUSICIAN
BUSINESSMAN
GUIDE FOR AUDIOBOOKS
TRADESMAN
EMPLOYEE / SCHOOL MANAGER
CLERGYMAN
PRIVATE EMPLOYEE
BANK SECTOR

HEALTH OPERATOR
STOREHOUSE MAN
OFFICIER

As we see, we are still dealing with small figures. This short overview, however, can help us to better organize support services, including training programmes.

Barriers and Obstacles

From what we have been discussing, it is easy to imagine obstacles and barriers. Here a short summary:

Internal barriers

- Prejudices, deriving mainly from scarce or no familiarity with real visually impaired persons. In Italy, to a greater extent than in European Northern countries, glance and body language is much more important in interpersonal communication, especially in some clue moments: a) starting the communication; b) feedback & so-called punctuations;
- Cultural stereotypes, privileging what is "politically correct" rather than what is really useful;
- Difficulty in thinking of good user-oriented solutions, so that, for example, people generally believe that there is no difference between looking at an object from very close and touching that same object;
- Over evaluation of IT solutions, ignoring the need for a different strategy of interaction man / machine, which is necessary for visually impaired users;
- Considering the visually impaired employee from a general point of view, we have different viewpoints and different attitudes towards work in general, just like any other person. Obviously, a good education, good level of independence (mobility, personal care, body language, verbal communication), good mastery of traditional equipment (e.g. Braille), and of assistive & adaptive technologies, ability to contrast frustrations, good adjustment capability to new and sometimes uneasy situations, all those factors undoubtedly can contribute to a better level of inclusion and satisfaction both of employer and worker.

On the contrary, an attitude based on a negative vision of work in general, or difficulties in respecting social rules, or some delays in development of mental / social skills, influence negatively the work relationship.

Finally, like for any social minority, very often a positive experience of a single blind worker influences the opinion of the employer concerning all blind persons, and, let us not forget, this is true also vice versa.

External factors

- Low occupation level in a given area / period of time in general;
- Too few factories / centers / public services with a significant number of employees (less than 250 for example);
- Rapid and often unpredictable changes in technologies, functions and tasks. It must be considered that a visually impaired person needs some more time in order to master new contents. Once he or she gets hold of it, he or she may even perform better than his / her sighted colleagues;

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- Need for permanent updating of knowledge and competences, which on turn requires specific learning / teaching strategies - e.g. accessible material, based mainly on written informatio , rather than exclusively or mainly on visual cues, e.g. manuals, guides and the likes);
- Availability of accessible mobility / transportation services - from home to work and vice versa;
- State and quality of technologies;
- Level of diffusion of digital connection at national level;

Assistive Technology Usage & Supply

The invention of Braille can be considered the dawn of the emancipation of the blind all over the world. Assistive & adaptive technologies (begin 1980's is certainly the second revolution. Main breakthroughs are:

- Drastic reduced need for copying from normal print into Braille (we used to hand copy parts of our textbooks or to have them recorded on tape by a sighted person);
- Increased independence in accessing digital resources;
- Total independence in making our choices when working with digital resources (journals, magazines, etc.);
- Drastic space reduction - we used to handle big heavy Braille volumes, whereas at present a normal memory card can contain millions of pages.

Critical points

- Giving for granted that any digital source / programme / application is simply accessible also and usable for visually impaired persons;
- Too fast updating of programmes & applications;
- Applications & sources of information generally designed in view of normally sighted users.
- These circumstances have some important negative consequences, such as:
- They disorient both the employer and the employee, if they are not familiar with this topic;
- Need for continuous updating of knowledge;
- Difficulties in keeping the step with sighted colleagues and need for avoidable external help.

Main possible solutions

First of all we must point out that special IT equipment & software are provided normally free of charge by our national Ministry of health, through its regional offices. Blind persons who are familiar with Braille (too few unfortunately), use paperless Braille, that is Braille display with 20 to 80 cells, in combination with a voice synthetizer,¹³ whereas adult blind, who have greater difficulties with Braille, use voice syntetizer; partially sighted use magnifying software, which generally have also a voice output¹⁴ Screen readers are either commercial - from Freedom Scientific, or NVDA which can be obtained for free.

¹³ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KMu3vvJo347FPPo61DGs9NBtQVgiWOb8/view?usp=sharing>

¹⁴ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AqCgilCgpOgQfipszC18wJzl0do6ZsZ_/view?usp=sharing

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Furthermore, depending on users' preferences, smartphones and relating apps are used, with particular regard to those apps which reduce need for external help, such as seeingay, Ariadne-GPS, and many other apps of general use¹⁵

As already pointed out, we must always consider the fact that in order to master those applications and the related hardware, including the normal keyboard, the visually impaired person needs a certain period of time. In fact, while all applications are user friendly for a sighted person, that is help the user to know in realtime what he can do and what he cannot do in a certain phase of his work, and give tips and suggestions about possible options, this is not always true for users with visual impairment, so that, before being able to use the programme properly and effectively, they need a certain training. This of course can reduce productivity on work and therefore can require to use some spare time in order to recover the gap.

Satisfaction Level

We do not have specific evidences concerning this issue. On the basis of feedback coming first of all from our key witnesses, and from operators in labour services which took part in our focus groups, tells us that the average satisfaction level is good. Obviously, our long year experience both with end users and with employers, tells us that, like for fully sighted employees, there are critical situations, as well as excellent cases.

STUDIES

Italian literature concerning blind and blindness is fairly rich with studies and researches in the domain of education, psychology, prevention; vice versa studies on occupation in general are not so numerous. An explanation for this might be the fact that, starting from the 60's of 1900, up to the first decade of this century, finding a job in traditional sectors was relatively easy. In coincidence with what I have called "the decay of traditional jobs", some studies have been conducted, which, indeed, help us to understand the main reasons of that decay, as well as possible strategies to contrast this trend.

Here I will mention 3 works:

- a) *"Blind DO NOT dream of darkness, living blindness successfully), 2008;*
- b) *A dissertation concerning blind and non traditional jobs, 2014-2015*
- c) *Blind who sort it out, a pamphlet edited by Italian Blind Union, 2019.*

a) Blind DO not dream of darkness. Living blindness successfully

Author: Mauro Marcantonio

Original title: I ciechi non sognano il buio. Vivere con successo la cecità.

Published by Franco Angeli - 2008

80 stories, 80 visually impaired persons working in non traditional domains, such as journalist, psychologist, school manager, sociologist, interpreter, composer, computer expert, university professor, businessman, etc.¹⁶

Here some extracts from the preface, written by Giuseppe De Rita General Secretary CENSIS [.....]

The question "I really don't see you?" thereby loses the vein of disturbing evocation: who knows by representing worlds using fragments is someone who must be immediately associated with the few or

¹⁵ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iMg7duRAODiDnwc3O1l8pc_x_po-L2la/view?usp=sharing

¹⁶ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A00imSMhWvJhs1C_vWe8Dn-1Si_yxEzj/view?usp=sharing

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the many sighted people they try to understand and build. And I like to note and point out that this is not too much reasoning high and voluntary, of sharing refined sensitivities; It is a proven reasoning by experiences of great concreteness, only if one explores the personal stories told in this volume: in each of them will be found not only an exemplification of that level of will and tenacity they have allowed the different personal paths, but you will also find the confirmation that these paths have lived and live on reciprocity and chiasmatic relationship between the blind and their life and work counterparts. And it is perhaps this evolution towards a growing reciprocity of sensations that will lead over time to eliminate, or at least reduce, the diversity that many of us continue to perceive when faced with a blind person. If Luzi is seen by Siena while the look, if a sighted person feels he is being seen in the mental representation of the blind, then it is not utopian to think that the historical trend, in the medium-long term, is towards the absorption of diversity into one superior vision of things and especially of human relations. It's a dream, maybe one of those colored ones do the blind? I don't think so, also because such a dream is better than the darkness of emotions in which so many sighted today live.
Giuseppe De Rita General Secretary CENSIS |

b) ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA School of psychology & science of education

TITLE: Visually impaired persons towards jobs which are not protected by special laws: competences and expedients aiming at an effective work integration.

Type of dissertation: empirical research methodology of education 2014-2015.¹⁷

The present work therefore aims to reconstruct historically, albeit synthetically, the relationship between the visually impaired and work and the related legislation, as well as to investigate the employment situation of some people currently working in professions that are not protected by special laws for the blind and their career paths. The questions we have asked ourselves are as follows: which professions do they hold? what qualifications do they have? what transversal skills do they think it is appropriate to possess? what difficulties did they find in accessing work? how did they overcome them? The starting hypothesis is that the possession of four of the citizen's key competences, in addition to some soft skills (a marked determination towards objectives, motivation and tenacity), and the possession of specific skills in the use of typhloinformatics tools and in the orientation and mobility of blind people, can constitute elements of prediction of job success in professions not protected by special laws for the blind.

This study and its hypotheses are based on some American studies (Cavanaugh and Giesen, 2012), ... Cruden, 2012), Crudden and McBroom, 1999).

c) C'è chi fa carriera

[in Itaian "ciechi" means the blind, so "c'è chi" fa carriera could sound "blind: somebody sorts it out!]. Written and published by the Italian Union of the Blind. This pamphlet includes an introduction, highlighting the main milestones of occupation of the blind in Italy.

Follows a thorough discussion about legal aspects, with special regard to laws and regulations concerning defici VS handicap, as defined in ICF and in UN convention. The pamphlet includes interviews with excellences, such as Maurizio Molinari, journalist at European Parliament, Massimo Morelli, professor of economics at European University, Prof. Massimo Morelli, Federico Borgia, Mayor of Cuneo (near Turin), Giovanna Perbellini, employed at Unicredit Bank as back-office operator and Piero Buongiorno, pianist.

¹⁷ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13D6uzu4ZJIHxUnZUxBQbtWhMcWIAR8Z6/view?usp=sharing>

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SUPPORT SCHEMES

Special Education

As described above, in Italy visually impaired students attend normal schools, starting from nursery up to university. Various kinds of resources - equipment, learning materials, tutors for study and mobility when needed have a significant impact on the quality of education. Furthermore, rehabilitation centers, what is known as "low vision centers", especially in some areas like Tuscany, offer targeted courses in Orientation & Mobility, skills for personal care, IT training, psychological support.

For what concerns vocational training, even in decay of traditional jobs, we have a few organizations which used to be special schools for the blind, which periodically organize acknowledged one-year courses for switchboard operators, which include foreign languages - generally English - database management, customer care, telemarketing, etc. The most active centers are in Trieste, Milan, Genoa, Bologna, IRIFOR Tuscany.

On demand, expenses for those courses are paid by local social security offices.

Finally, Central IRIFOR plans and finances short local courses (from 10 to 60 hours), dealing with specific skills, such as Windows 10, ECDL, and the likes.

Financial Support Schemes

Financial provisions differ with regard to type and degree of disability, but also with regard to the cause of invalidity. So, for instance, financial support for war blind is greater than for civil blind. The main provision is called accompaniment allowance, which goes to totally blind of all ages and independent from incomes of any kind. Currently it amounts to € 930,00. On the other hand, the so-called "special indemnity" for Partially blind (visus not greater than 1/20 and /or visual field not greater than 10%) amounts to € 212,43.

ICF

As above mentioned, ICF introduces a new perspective for the assessment of personal needs. In this new approach, evaluation of needs includes, among others, activity of the patients, existing resources / services, possible opportunities e.g. training courses, technologies, etc. On demand by the patient, and with his cooperation, local social security offices develop an individual project, which includes the personal and familiar history, a so-called "functional profile", that is a list of strong and weak points, a certain number of realistic goals / objectives to attain, a sort of agenda, and an esteem of financial resources aiming at putting into practice the individual project. ICF and individual projects is not uniformly widespread in Italy, but some Regions, like Tuscany and other, have adopted it, under the general title "independent life".

Other Local social security offices use taxi allowance for blind persons at work, in order to travel from home to their workplace and back.

Finally, in some areas, volunteer services are particularly active, and young civil volunteers help the blind person on his workplace, as assistants.

Financial Support & Sanctions For Employers

Law 68/99 on compulsory employment of persons with disabilities reads:

.... *Omissis*

REGIONAL FUND - The regions establish the Regional Fund for the employment of disabled people, to be used to finance regional employment programmes and related services. The Fund come from the imposition of the administrative sanctions provided for by Law 68/99 and the contributions paid by employers, as well as the contribution of foundations, private bodies and other interested parties (see appendix).

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Best Practices

In this paragraph I wish to draw attention mainly on the human ability to activate compensatory strategies and specific skills in order to overcome difficult situations. The case of blindness should be considered just one example, on which we are going to concentrate. Main scope of this paragraph is not to astonish or to move the reader, but rather to show some compensatory strategies which allow to overcome difficulties deriving from visual impairment.

Plasticity of our brain

Recent studies of neuroscientists have demonstrated that, when a given area of our cerebral cortex does not receive stimuli, instead of remaining idle, devotes itself to process signals from different channels (tactile / body position / motion, etc. In other words, the cerebral area normally devoted to process visual signals is not left aside, but devotes itself to improve the effectiveness of remaining areas. What we call "compensatory education", that is developing all skills in view of reducing the gap deriving from visual impairment, is based on the above-mentioned natural re-structuring process of our brain. Obviously, lack of sight has important implications, affecting the development of almost every skill / ability: practical ability, mobility, communication, access to information, environment control, with negative impact on mental skills and on the emotional area. Education ("e-duco" = to guide somebody out) is the process through which the natural compensatory processes are brought to awareness, developed and exploited in view of an integral development of the person.

All cases of good practices have some common characteristics, which can be summarized as follows:

- a) good family support;
- b) good education in inclusive learning environment;
- c) good mastery of all above mentioned sectors;
- d) good relationships between colleagues;
- e) open minded employer, who distributes roles and tasks taking into account strong and weak points of the visually impaired worker. The following article seems particularly instructive for a better understanding of scientific basis concerning compensatory education.

"I have discovered that the congenital blind can build mental images."¹⁸

Historic recall

As mentioned in several occasions, the history of employment of the blind in Italy, like in other countries, is based on positive experiences, which have demonstrated that even without sight a human individual can develop good manual & mental skills.¹⁹

Currently we have some blind journalist, interpreters, civil mediators, operators in the domain of credit recovery, as well as in offices dealing with tourist information.

IT - In 1980's we started a course for blind programmers, in cooperation with IBM. Many of the students have found their job in that sector²⁰

¹⁸ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LDbKcxrQ_g_1Gyuh0OyeoHSCRDgYULJt/view?usp=sharing

¹⁹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BvUAN41EhWOS_OfqydmnDkkwzfPHi55x/view?usp=sharing

²⁰ <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1buP4QULhODfU7FNvaSkHv2TYvtzSdi2u>

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Sculptor - Although we are not dealing with mass professions, these excellences give an idea of how manual skills can be employed even without seeing.

Music - Apart from Andrea Bocelli, we used to have hundreds of music teachers, pianists, organists, piano tuners, and now we have a certain number of pianists, even a blind conductor,²¹ a few teachers at State Conservatories, some composers, others working with electronic tools.

Here some examples of new professions:

Dubbing²²

music editing;^{23 24}

As some of our key witness reported, Bank of Italy, St.Paul Institute (Turin) and other big credit institutes have among their employees hundreds of visually impaired blind persons who started working as telephone operators, and at present deploy different tasks, with mutual satisfaction.

- research centers - We have a small number of visually impaired persons working in different branches of research, using accessible technologies.²⁵
- University - we have also here a small number of professors, one for all Prof. Massimo Morelli, who teaches economics at European University.²⁶
- Losing sight does not mean loosing life! 27

Education & Support Schemes

As mentioned above, We have regional counselling services for teachers, students and their families (see above). For what concerns people who want to get a job, we have both public and private agencies, which try to match employer's and employee's needs. Considering the fact that the vast majority of visually impaired persons draw benefit from laws regulating traditional jobs, those agencies practically keep a list of possible placements and advice the candidates. In case of relevant changes, such as change of physical workplace, or changes in tasks and mansions, we have a public tutoring service, which sends a tutor for a certain period of time, who helps the visually impaired person to familiarize with the new situation.

Multihandicapped Persons

In these last years we observed a constant increase of the number of persons with multiple handicap, thanks to a higher level of prevention and decrease of infant mortality rate. These persons, who can attend either regular schools with tailored programmes which include interaction with special centers, or residential schools, are taken on charge by social psychological services and many of them go to daily occupational centers, where operators organize specific activities, like simple manipulation activities, socializations, and development of everyday skills, such as personal care, eating behaviours, use of money, etc.

²¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X8NbzqamadE7ZNpzkNgaMEMLqxTjLlhG/view?usp=sharing>

²² <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PgZu-obcxSbnbrsVOMo4SexHCldxJKDj/view?usp=sharing>

²³ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zul8iGikdDX5VviwD9f1EI8W-C5BTup-/view?usp=sharing>

²⁴ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WqZelDitHRNsvmCIVJtrd1sewjkeJvvY/view?usp=sharing>

²⁵ https://drive.google.com/file/d/191A4aX-ABude8sFCNaA51H73PbfAn_wo/view?usp=sharing

²⁶ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nsRWRu55pJkLOf5TWKyijRMcMuqwMM1i/view?usp=sharing>

²⁷ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K8rrxafpOFDS13xB05NEI9IP-24elmAZ/view?usp=sharing>

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LEGISLATION POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION

Policy Makers Working for Blind and Vip

Recently many Italian Municipalities have introduced a so-called "disability manager", that is a public officer who are responsible for coordinating efforts and to make proposals aiming at ameliorating all aspects concerning persons with disabilities and their families. IRIFOR and all Italian organizations for and of the visually impaired maintain contacts with all policy makers, as explained above, who for any reason can contribute to solve problems regarding education, inclusion, job opportunities, accessibility of physical / technological environments, transportation services and other services for the general public.

Laws and Regulations

For the scopes of this research, we should bear in mind that the three main aspects concerning laws and regulations, e.g. Social Security, Education, Work are close connected between each other. Using a metaphor, we should consider them as 3 faces of one and the same medal. Following this metaphor, we can say the that medal is called "toward a more inclusive society". Laws reflect the spirit of a given population, the ideas and aspirations of intellectual elites, but also differences existing among main social layers, cultures, religious opinions of a certain period.

Our Chart has been designed and published immediately after World War 2, and at that time two main forces were in competitions: the Roman Catholic Church and the socialist parties. First article of our Constitutions reads: [...] *Italy is a unique republic founded on work*. The term "work" corresponds to a compromise between what we could call Labour parties (representing the working class) and the Christian democratic party, which, according to catholic tradition (see the Benedectine Order), considers manual work as part of the path towards Divinity, together with prayer (*ora et labora*). Art. 3 of the Italian Chart is devoted to what we would call "equal opportunities" for every citizen, no matter his / her political, religious, cultural tendencies, race, gender orientation. The same article commits the State to "remove" all barriers which could stop or hinder the implementation of this principle.

Laws however contain not only prescriptions and penalties, but often also main goals and aims, which need some time for their practical implementation, and require specific behaviours by policy makers, operators and by the General Public; this on turns requires modifications or even abandoning some old habits. In other words often good laws need a real cultural revolution in order to be implemented and put into practice, which is a challenge for every community. Paradoxically though the current situation consequent to Corona Virus might draw attention on this fact and maybe convey new energies towards common welfare.

The blind towards their emancipation: the Italian story

"Work is light that reappears"! This was one of the mottoes launched by the founders of the Italian Union of the Blind (1920). They also pointed out the close relationship between work, education, autonomy - not only economic - self image and image of the blind person in the common awareness.

It is therefore worthwhile, in this paper, to highlight the main milestones of the emancipation of the blind in Italy.

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Activities and legislation

Literature has many examples of blind persons working in different areas. All of them show the effort to make a living using their abilities. Future tellers, poets (Homerus is said to be blind, although his existence is doubtful), many organists, composers, singers, mathematicians (Nicholas Saunderson mentioned above), some sculptors, but also farmers, retail sellers, craftsmen - carpets, baskets, chairs... Near Florence we had a very well known rifle builder, who operated in the 30's years at Calenzano. Those however are only a small minority, while the most part, who came from the poorer layers of the society, were beggars.

Nicolodi, the founder of the Italian Union of the Blind, founded the first vocational training center in Florence (1924), introducing massage - which he imported directly from Japan - and handicraft. In 1934 he founded the national work agency for the blind, with three centers (Florence, Rome and Naples). those workshops employed 70% blind and 30% sighted persons. He obtained from the government the right to manufacture a certain percentage of military shoes (12%), pullovers and the authorization to build dog tags for all Italian Municipalities. The national labor agency for the blind ended about 1975, and blind workers were employed in public switchboards.

Switchboard operator and main laws & regulations

After World War 2 Italy, as all other Western Countries, moved towards a more technological society. In those years we had the first experiments in the field of switchboard operators, based on flattering results in Bologna (Sicilian Regional Law nr. 21 1957), which obliged all public and private centers with over 100 workers to employ a blind operator with a school certificate from an authorized training center. July 14 1957 we had the first national law, who, for the first time, acknowledges the role and function of the Italian Union of the Blind, and, most important, introduced the national register of blind switch operators.

Law 778/1960 obliges private employers with minimum 5 lines, and public institutions with minimum 100workers to employ a blind switchboard operator. Law 155/1965 obliges public employers to employ a blind telephone operator, no matter how many lines or how many employees. Law 397/1971 allows those who loose their sight on work to be included in the national register of blind switch operators. Art. 4 of this law defines the function allowance for blind switchboard operators.

Law 113/1985²⁸ makes order and introduces important principles, which are still operational, and which have been confirmed in Law 68/99, concerning reordering of work for persons with disabilities.²⁹

The weak point of Law 113/85: This law is based on the concept of *operating station*, which at that time was a physical object, allowing to transfer incoming and outgoing calls from an office to another. Modern technology as practically suppressed the physical object called "operating station", so that Law 113/85 can be ignored.

Obligation to register new installation

Law 113/85 obliges the State telephone company to inform the Ministry for Labor about the installation of a switchboard. After 1985 there are many private telephone providers, so now it is practically impossible to be informed about new installations.

²⁸ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K8rrxafpOFDS13xB05NEI9IP-24elmAZ/view?usp=sharing>

²⁹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZHtQrVMojNj0IQD4-WZ0hLgBKLpgArVe/view?usp=sharing>

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Law 68/99 introduces important innovations. Blind persons keep their right to work as switchboard operators, but are allowed to compete with other persons with disabilities in State competitive examinations reserved for persons with disabilities.

In these last years a certain number of graduated visually impaired persons work in public offices, while others, originally employed as telephone operators, after a period of requalification, occupy different offices / functions in their workplace.

Training

In Italy we have two possible options for vocational training in general:

- a) State courses, which, in our case last 3 years, and can be accessed after compulsory school (14 years of age);
- b) Regional vocational training, 3 or 5 years, accessible also after compulsory school.

Adult blind – the majority of visually impaired persons are adult blind. This means that very often it is necessary to requalify the adult blind, in order to be able to get a new job. For this reason in Italy we have one year training course for switch operator.

Masseurs & main laws

The profile of the masseur was introduced in 1918, that is immediately after World War 1, when military hospitals introduced the role of masseurs, in order to value the experiences accumulated during the war in the recovery of the wounded, in their rehabilitation and functional recovery; massage was considered as an art of auxiliary health care. The first practical courses for massages were authorized at the Royal Professional School attached to the National Institute for Blind Adults of Florence, created with Royal Decree 13-11-1924 n. 1249.

Afterwards the masseur is mentioned in **law of 23-6-1927 n. 1264** and following modifications, up to R.D. 26-2-1941. Here we find precise acknowledgment of blind masseurs who is entitled to perform this task.

Law 15-6-1950, n. 376, establishes in the hospitals the role of masseurs, to be carried out by persons with a qualification issued by authorized schools, and establishes preference for blind masseurs.

The institution of the school for blind masso-physiotherapists comes from law no. 570 / 1961.

Duration of course = 3 years, and course is accessible immediately after compulsory school (14 years of age).

End of '70 Italy introduces a vast reformation of welfare and health services. In accordance with international standard, the manual massage tended to be considered pertinent to wellness, which did not belong to general health services provided by the State to every citizen. On the other hand, neurologic massage, physiotherapy, was introduced among cares provided by the State. For what concerns qualification, the above-mentioned reformation requires a university degree.

Vocational / University courses

There is no legal definition of a blind rehabilitation therapist, in the sense that the diploma of rehabilitation therapist is the same for both sighted and blind people. There are approved universities and regional schools. These courses can be accessed with a high school diploma and, as there are a

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limited number of schools, they can be accessed after passing the selection test. The test consists of applications for general education and in some regional schools also a psychological test. It should be remembered that blind competitors have the possibility to use, on request, during the written tests, a sighted person made available by the examination committee (Royal Decree no. 653 of 4 May 1925, art. 102).

The programs of the regional schools are decided by the Ministerial Decree of 10 February 1974, while those of the universities can be found on their websites. Both schools have a three-year duration and the programs are more or less similar and include specializations that are generally either in orthopedics or neurology. These schools are in connection with local health authorities / services, and/ or with local hospitals where students can do their practice.

The Region of Liguria has decided to reserve two positions for blind rehabilitation therapists at the local school (1987) and for years the University of Padua has welcomed blind people among its students without creating prejudices, as well as Brescia University.

The State vocational school of Florence in cooperation with the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of the local University have stipulated in 1999 a special agreement for the activation of the university diploma (DU) in physiotherapy reserved to blind students with a high school certificate. The possibility for aspiring visually impaired physiotherapists to enrol in the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery in order to obtain a degree in physiotherapy is allowed in many of the Universities, including Bari university, recently accessible.

We have two State registers, one for massotherapists (Law n. 403/71), and the register of rehabilitation therapists (Law 11 Jan. 1994 n. 29).³⁰

Obligations of employers

Masso-physiotherapists

Public sector: all hospitals, universities, USLs, etc. with at least 200 beds must employ a blind graduate masso-physiotherapist even in derogation of the prohibitions of employment (Law no. 403 of 19 May 1971, art. 2). This law still provides that starting from 700 beds and for every 300 more or fraction of more than 200 beds, an extra masso-physiotherapist who is blind must be hired: and still one masso-physiotherapist who is blind for every 50 beds in wards specialized in recovery and rehabilitative care.

Rehabilitation therapists

Public sector: For rehabilitation therapists, the above mentioned Law No. 29 of 11 January 1994 provides for 5% of each staff in each ward or rehabilitation clinic of each ULSS (Article 4, paragraph 1).

Private: one rehabilitation therapist for every 35 employees (art. 4, paragraph 3 of Law 11 January 1994).

For those who do not comply with the provisions of the two mentioned laws in this paragraph and in 686/1961 there are sanctions provided for by art. 5 of the Law of 11 January 1994 and by art. 4 and 6 of Law no. 686 21 July 1961.

³⁰ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zOurWS2Vabz5dswzRNS_yArD-DdJEue7/view?usp=sharing

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Teachers

Before Nicolodi's achievements (3rd decade of 20th century), we had some teachers working in public schools. It may be of some interest today to highlight some circumstances which have made this possible. a) The Italian school system, like everywhere, was based on verbal communication to a greater extent than today; b) school was accessible only for upper social layers; c) the teacher had a much higher reputation among general public than today; d) students selection was based mainly on academic achievements, save special cases of deviant behaviour. Blind teachers could deploy their activities in school subjects which did not require written tests, such as juridical matters, philosophy, history, music; they were generally active in high schools, where students were supposed to be more responsible and more respectful. We had also a small number of headmasters.³¹

The Decay of Traditional Jobs

Changes are challenges

Greek philosopher (Eratosthenes) had put under their lenses the dilemma "stabile VS change". We are presently experimenting how fast and often unpredictable changes occur. Changes are generally familiar - growth, seasons, but, when they are either too fast, or unexpected / unpredictable, they arise fears, anxieties, in some case hostility. In the case of visually impaired persons this is still more true than with sighted people. Sight, as we know, prevents us from dangerous situations. Absence of vision on the opposite, exposes the individual to unpredictable situations. The above considerations, although very concise, can help us to better understand the decay of traditional jobs and the efforts of IUB aiming at finding acceptable and realistic solutions. The old regime qualified the visually impaired person as switch operator or masseur after a 3-year vocational course. For adult blind persons (over 18), one year was enough.

Different circumstances determined the crisis of traditional jobs:

- a) Evolution of technology, with automatic response;
- b) Reformation of health and care services, which practically excluded manual massage, in favour of neurological massage. This means that the new physiotherapist had to get a university degree in order to get a job.
- c) Higher training and new technologies were the main factors which determined the rapid decay of the idea of sheltered jobs.

Reactions

For what concerns the switchboard operator, IUB has tried to extend the definition of the so-called operating station, which is the basis of the possibility to employ a switchboard operator. The new definition takes into consideration also automatic responders; furthermore, IUB obtained that 3 new profiles were considered equivalent to the profile of switchboard operator, and consequently entitled the qualified operator to be hired by the employer.

D.M. 10 January 2000, known as Salvi Decree, from the Minister of labor of that time, specifies:

- 1) telephone operator for customer information and customer care;
- 2) telephone operator for use and management of data base management;
- 3) telephone for telemarketing and alarm helpline / tele rescue services.³²

³¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AodqQxE487ioizPnl1sfbypstljE3wFb/view?usp=sharing>

³² <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tEvRIXdjEcK1jMz3j-NiNIT3UA2nlNqN/view?usp=sharing>

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Towards inclusive laws

School integration

In Italy, like in other countries, starting from 1960, the traditional model of a community based on self-contained area, or, as we used to say, based on watertight compartment, began to be questioned. This happened in many social / psychological domains, including the school system. The core idea was to change perspective, that is to change the starting point in observing and measuring the person with one or more disabilities.

Psychiatrists, sociologists, philosophers, found out that it was more effective and more realistic to consider the human individual starting not from its "deficit", that is its "minus", what is defective, what fails, but rather starting from a different point of view, which considers the human person as a holistic reality, taking into account all its spheres, e.g. the biological sphere, the psychological sphere, the social sphere. In other words - as they argued - if we consider primarily what fails, leaving aside what is active, we risk to neglect or to totally ignore many available resources / potentialities, opportunities offered by the social environment, in view of the development of the individual. Following this vision, many so-called total institutions were questioned, like asylums, children's homes, and all "special" institutions. In Italy we had sheltered centers for mentally retarded persons, or for children of war veterans, for civil orphans, war orphans, etc.

For what concerns school, Law 517 of 1977 introduced the principle of integration. The general idea which inspired this law can be summarized as follows:

- the effectiveness of the learning process depends certainly on the availability of appropriate physical environment, appropriate equipment, prepared staff, but to a significant extent also from emotional and social factors. Special schools, which were well equipped, very often lacked social interaction between blind students and their sighted peers. Law 517 tried to value the good achievements obtained by special schools, and to add benefits deriving from positive social relationship, in our case, with sighted peers. Thus the Law defined a certain number of facilities and measures, in order to make sure that all necessary requirements were available and effective, such as *a)* trained special teachers; *b)* team working including planning and monitoring, and, very important, team working between school staff and local social / psychological operators.

We all must be aware of the fact that a law, even the best possible law, is not sufficient to change a complex reality, because very often the preparation of the school staff, the availability of adequate equipment, in some cases some resistances coming from parents, all those factors can hinder or even produce hostile reactions and significant steps backwards.

Law 104/1992 on persons with disabilities.³³

It is a real milestone along the path towards equal opportunities and non discrimination. Here just the most relevant aspects, with regard to the scopes of this paper.

Inspiring idea

Handicap is not an unmodifiable characteristic of the individual, but the outcome of the relationship between the person and its human, physical, technological environment. Inclusion can be promoted by modifying this relationship, and by offering the possibility for the person with disabilities to

³³ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jghZDoI2LZs2jEC874Pa6wCc13N6iVX_/view?usp=sharing

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interact positively with its environment, considering negative consequences deriving from the deficit as well as potentialities, opportunities, technological perspectives.

Main purposes

a) respect of individual needs, diversity active citizenship, considering not only limits but also potentialities of the person with disabilities and its environment; b) prevention of *physical, sensorial, social handicap / marginalization*; c) lifelong rehabilitation & support to person with disabilities and / or family; d) establishing a partnership between person with disabilities and / or family and services – school, job orientation, health ... - aimed at defining attainable goals, needed resources, timing; e) promoting universal accessibility concerning public services / cultural and natural heritage, education services, technologies, etc. f) *promoting research in different areas, such as health, technologies, social studies, in order to offer scientific support for the scopes of the law itself.*

Universal Accessibility

Another very important law (known as **Stanca Law - 2004**) defines guidelines and specific obligations concerning accessibility of digital information and technology, including applications and / or websites, and obligations for Public Administrations.³⁴ Recent modifications included also mobile apps, which was not considered initially by the law. Unfortunately, this law is not being implemented as it should, not only for burocratical reasons, but certainly because "accessibility and usability", rather than a set of well-defined rules is also a sort of live language, which, like every spoken language, is in continuous development.

Accessibility means the ability of IT systems to provide services and information suitable for all, without discrimination, even for those who are constrained to use assistive technologies or special configurations due to disabilities.

Usability means "the degree to which a product can be used by specific users to perform specific tasks with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specific context of use" (standard 9241 "Ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals (VDTs)" of the ISO International Organization for Standardization).

Usability problems are investigated in the Human-Computer Interaction with particular focus on the user interfaces; for example, there is a problem when the designer's conceptual model does not coincide with the end-user conceptual model. The degree of usability is more than the closer the two models' approach.

Main properties of a usable system can be summarized as follows:

- A) Effectiveness: accuracy and completeness with which certain users can achieve certain goals in particular environments;
- B) Efficiency: the resources spent in relation to the accuracy and completeness of the objectives achieved;
- C) Satisfaction: the comfort and acceptability of the work system for its users and other people affected by its use;
- D) Ease of learning: The user must achieve good performance in a short time;

³⁴ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-A6oLQGM-3h3YVPO-HbuDo-7pIVGPNpk/view?usp=sharing>

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- E) Ease of storage: the user must be able to interact with an interface even after a period of long unused use, without being forced to start from scratch;
- F) Safety and robustness to error: The impact of the error must be inversely proportional to the probability of error.

The Portal of the Ministry of the Interior is engaged in the Working Group for Usability (GLU), promoted by the Department of Public Service in 2012 with the aim of encouraging initiatives and disseminating tools for the affirmation of the culture of usability within the public administrations (PA).

One of the most important innovations for administrations concerns the obligation to publish, by 23 September 2020, the Accessibility Declaration. Public Administrations (Pas) must indicate the compliance status of each site and mobile application with accessibility requirements. The accessibility declaration is communicated through a special web application. In addition, this Law for Digital Accessibility has assigned to the Agency for the Digital Italy (AgID) numerous tasks, including:

- 1) oversee the implementation of the above-mentioned Law;
- 2) provide assistance to the Public Administration for the application of current legislation;
- 3) issue technical rules, circulars and guidelines on the accessibility of IT tools;
- 4) monitor the websites and mobile applications of the Public Administration;
- 5) periodically report to the European Commission on the monitoring outcomes;
- 6) disseminate accessibility issues in the Public Administration.

Technical specifications for workstations.

In 2018, with Legislative Decree No. 106 amending and updating Law no. 4/2004, Italy adopted EU Directive 2016/2102, aimed at improving the accessibility of websites and mobile apps in the public sector of each Member State.

Accessibility guidelines

In implementation of the European Directive AGID has issued the Guidelines on accessibility of IT tools, in force since 10 January 2020, which direct the Public Administration to the provision of increasingly accessible services. In practice, the accessibility technical requirements introduced by the Italian Law in 2004, and confirmed and modified with later amendments refer to the WCAG 2.1 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) defined by W3C. The Accessibility Statement introduces the so-called "Feedback procedure", which allows users to report additional inaccessibility issues on mobile sites or apps. Only in the event of a failure or unsatisfactory response from the administration, the citizen can resort to an "Implementation Procedure", by contacting the Digital Ombudsman.

Accessibility goals

The PAs must publish, by 31 March each year, the Accessibility Objectives for the current year and the state of implementation of the teleworking plan.³⁵

³⁵ <https://www.agid.gov.it/it/design-servizi/accessibilita>

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In 2015, the Agency for Digital Italy issued the indications and guidelines that employers must follow in order to prepare the most suitable technical tools and assistive technologies for carrying out the tasks to which the disabled employee is assigned. The document was shared with administrations, organizations, federations and associations committed to the issue of accessibility.

The circular is available at the URL

https://www.agid.gov.it/sites/default/files/repository_files/circolari/agid_specifiche_postazioni_lavoro_0.pdf

ICF is the final step of the development of the inclusion system.

Italy was the first country which adopted ICF in a Ministerial project (2019).

As already-mentioned ICF is centered on the perspective of "functioning" rather than the perspective of "deficit". Diversity is considered not only a normal circumstance, but also an opportunity for all and for everybody, in order to widen minds, develop new ideas, and proceed all together towards the common welfare.

WHOLE CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN ITALY

I have tried to outline the core problem of our RADAR project, that is how to improve the current situation concerning job opportunities for persons with visual impairment in Italy, in an European perspective. As illustrated in the introduction, this problem has several aspects, all of which should be taken into consideration following a holistic vision, rather than concentrating our attention just on one of those aspects, for crucial that it may be, such as legislation, or accessibility, or available services. All of the above-mentioned factors, and other factors which have been dealt with in this research contribute to a possible solution of the problem, and are close connected between each other.

I decided to compose this paper using both statistical data, although not so precise and not so complete, witnesses coming both from visually impaired stakeholders, but also from fully sighted persons who happened to deal with this problem even for the first time. I did this expressly, because my experience of leader of the Tuscany branch of the Italian Union of Blind and Partially Sighted (UICI) as convinced me that

the first step towards the solution of complex problem is **sharing** the problem. The whole paper aims at helping the reader to **stay in tune with the problem, that is to establish an empathy between the new-comer - the reader - and the main stakeholders, that is persons with visual impairment and their organization.**

Inclusion means mainly trying to meet each other, in order to reduce distances and in order to change difficulties into new opportunities.

The current situation, deriving from COVID19, paradoxically, obliges everybody to invent new solutions based on best possible exploitation of existing resources, in order to come out from this labyrinth all together.

Antonio Quatraro

Florence, September 16 2020

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Italy Key witnesses report: Summary

Premise

The focus group took place on May 27 2020 and was devoted to key witnesses. The selected sample is representative of different economic and business areas, roles/duties and responsibilities at national level. The focused sectors are represented by: banking and financial, research centers, wellness and services, tourism.

Additional Notes

During the discussion a certain number of ideas, suggestions and views came out, which we find very relevant for our research. We therefore included a specific paragraph named "Additional questions", which reflects the discussion.

Participants

The online session was attended by representatives of the Italian Partners (IRIFOR and Centro Machiavelli) and a selected sample of 6 key witnesses, all of which are employees.

Research Tool – Focus Group: Data analysis

Num. of submitted questionnaires: 6

Num. of filled questionnaires: 6

Overall Comments

On the basis of feedback from key witnesses, following common strong points are to be found:

- 1) High level of education;
- 2) Good level of information about main laws & provisions concerning blind and visually impaired persons;
- 3) Satisfactory matching between work and personal expectations;
- 4) High / very high level of effectiveness of technologies and internal procedures used for their tasks / functions;
- 5) Good level of human relationships – with colleagues / cooperators;
- 6) Perceived good / high -level of satisfaction of their colleagues;
- 7) Good / high level of cooperation with colleagues;
- 8) Need for extra work (quite a lot / a lot)
- 9) Acceptable / good level of mobility / external help for travelling from home to work and back;
- 10) Good internal workplace mobility;
- 11) Good / high level of adaptation of changes to specific needs;

Finally, very realistic suggestions for young persons wishing to obtain a job. We prefer reporting the recommendations integrally, for their vividness and their clarity:

-Team working;

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-study and then make yourself known through traineeships, community service and other similar activities;

- Lots of specific studies and sacrifice;

The most important thing to go on is, maybe, to believe in it in the first place. The required effort is not giving a rest. You cannot indulge a normal and restful mediocrity, you always need to be at the top, one step ahead; This is quite tiresome and not always repays you fully. After 30 years of work, I confess, I'm starting to feel the weigh, but it is not yet the time to give up.

The most important point, I believe, can be summarized as follows: a blind person, but, perhaps, any disabled person, in order to be fully inserted in a work group, must be able to solve more problems than problems he creates. If one is particularly prepared and, on average, when there is a problem, his intervention is needed, because without him things can hardly go on in the same way, then all the other problems are solved: the software, the hardware, being accompanied to a certain place, etc., become negligible or surmountable difficulties. Things that everyone should solve in some way. If, on the other hand, one is in touch with the others, or he is unable to provide advanced solutions to problems, then everything becomes insurmountable. I realize that we have made a fairly difficult picture, but this is the reality: fight, fight and still fight. I repeat, it is tiring, but the satisfactions sometimes come, however you can only do all this if you are driven by something that comes from within, a personal need that allows you to keep going all the way. It must also be said, however, that, unfortunately, in addition to this commitment and natural talent, at least until today, it is also necessary to be lucky enough to meet the right people at the right time. People who cannot understand the value of a blind person are not convinced even after years of work. Those who can understand do it immediately. Then things, interactions and tools can be optimized, but everyone's willingness to do it is necessary. I've always worked very hard, but I've also been lucky enough to meet the right people. I repeat, to be fully inserted in a work group you need a lot of things, it is a mix that, unfortunately, occurs with some difficulty, but the blind person must do what he can: work hard. If you have a passion, you should focus on it as much as possible, make that passion become your job. It doesn't matter if it doesn't exist or if it seems difficult, it will be your greatest satisfaction. If this is not possible, find another passion, and so on. There is necessarily something feasible in such a large world. To graduate in an economic, mathematical or linguistic subject; Focus heavily on the development of a receptive and proactive personality, cultivating original and distinctive interests, which can favor any unusual skills; have, as far as possible, the widest range of experiences (travel, training, etc.); Do not be afraid to propose yourself, without presumption or superficiality, in new roles and tasks, inclusive work tables, organizational or technical experimentations: however, it will be an excellent reminder for superiors and colleagues.

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Remarks

All the researching materials such as questionnaires' templates, elaboration of survey grids of Key Witnesses are available and consultable from RADAR TEAF Repository –ITALY Complete working Materials Dec 2020 : [Link to Google Drive

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tE5B_TcenOjLuHwRzluHAmPjYWOPd2nU - TEAF Repository – ITALY complete working materials].

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Italy Focus Group: Summary

Premise

Within the researching activities foreseen by the **RADAR project** in Italy have been conducted 2 Focus Groups: the first one aimed to Labor Services Operators coming from the *Tuscany Regional Employment Agency* – ARTI (held online on 15th April 2020) and the second one involving entrepreneurial actors, business representatives and employers (held online on 20th of May 2020).

Both the Focus Group activities are placed in the broader framework of actions to map and highlight - on a European scale -the current procedures and good practices for the job placement and employability of blind and partially sighted people, describing their strengths and weaknesses and accessibility prospects, connected to the use of new technologies.

The data collected were functional to the collection of necessary information for the development of the *T.E.A.F - "Training, Employability and Accessibility Framework"* - providing information regarding the Italian reality, to which will be added the same collected in the partner countries.

The selected **sample of Labor Services Operators** is representative of the different roles / duties and responsibilities present within the aforementioned Services and belongs to different territorial areas such as: Florence and neighboring municipalities (Campi Bisenzio, Pontassieve, Scandicci) and Arezzo, while that of **Employers** is representative of different economic and business areas, roles/duties and responsibilities at national level. The focused sectors are represented by: banking and financial subjects, research centers, services in tourism and third sectors.

The Italian researching team leading both the online Focus Groups was composed by Antonio Quatraro; Barbara Leporini; Paola Trabalzini; Alessandro Fioravanti (IRIFOR), Mario Paiano; Giulia Moretti (CENTRO MACHIAVELLI).

Main objectives

The main objectives of the Focus Group were split according to the related targets:

For Labor Services Operators:

- a) Collect information on active policies carried out by the Employment Offices for employability, career and training guidance, job placement and specific support for blind and partially sighted people;
- b) Detect the considerations and needs of the Employment Operators in this regard.

For Employers and Entrepreneurial Actors in general:

- a) Collect information on good practices, procedures, strengths and lacks of the access and participation to the business process of the blind and visually impaired workers;
- b) Gather considerations and needs of the Entrepreneurial Actors and employers concerning this topic.

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Participants

Labor Service Operators Focus Group (14 April 2020)	Employers Focus Group (20 May 2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A. Manco, Arezzo ARTI Manager (personal support services, job placement, training orientation); ● M. Damasso, ARTI Parterre (FI) / ARTI Pontassieve, Head of targeted placement; ● I. Lazzerini, Resp. Preselection of the targeted placement for companies Law 68/99 with hiring obligation; ● L. Cuda, ARTI Campi Bisenzio (FI), reception and orientation services; ● G. Frasca, Head of targeted placement, job supply-demand matching for public and private companies Law 68/99; ● M. Masiani, ARTI Empoli (FI), reception and orientation services; ● S. Casini, ARTS Campi Bisenzio (FI) ● A. Bartolomei, ARTI Florence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● T. Torres, BANCA d'ITALIA, Roma. ● A. Celli ● A. Lorieri ● C. Montani, CNR, Pisa ● E. Bonomi, CST-Centro Studi Turistici, Firenze ● G.P. Gallerano, ENEA, Frascati ● P. Carbonaro, Consorzio CO&SO, Firenze ● V. Turrini, PAS Network (Physiotherapy Area), Firenze ● F. Manconi, BANCA d'ITALIA, Firenze. ● F. Vanni, De Plus Planet, Firenze

Activities carried out and methods of implementation

The specific implemented activities as well as the related applied methodology to conduct the Focus Groups have been split according to the related targets:

For Labor Services Operators:

The Focus Group was structured as described in following sections:

- 1) Presentation of the participants and their activities within the reference ARTI (s), with specific regard to the management of actions to support employability / job supply / demand matching for blind and partially sighted people;
- 2) General introduction to the objectives and activities of the RADAR project;
- 3) Introduction of the "European Framework for Training, Employability & Accessibility to the Labor Market" for blind and partially sighted people (TEAF) and contextualization of the contribution required from the participants in the Focus Group for field research;
- 4) Guided discussion on key issues concerning: *Main job opportunities available to date/accessible for blind and partially sighted people; Good practices for the employability and job placement of blind and partially sighted people; Incentives and possible actions or programs to support the employability and job placement of blind and partially sighted people; Possible prospects for strengthening the guidance and support activities for the job placement of blind and partially sighted people, through a specific preparation of the operators in charge of these tasks (detection of needs);*
- 5) Filling of the proper *Focus Group Questionnaire*³⁶ including specific questions on the treated issues for the quali-quantitative data collection.

³⁶ Detail FOCUS GROUP Report of ITALY for RADAR Project: Online Dec 2020 : [Link to Google Drive https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aDFY8TU4B9n8KSmcI_4N30B1_ZsTQUjL - TEAF Repository - complete

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For Employers and Entrepreneurial Actors in general:

The Focus Group was structured in the following sections:

- 1) Presentation of the participants and their activities within their business, with specific regard to the management of actions to support employability and work-placement of blind and partially sighted people;
- 2) General introduction to the objectives and activities of the RADAR project;
- 3) Introduction of the "European Framework for Training, Employability & Accessibility to the Labor Market" for blind and partially sighted people (TEAF) and contextualization of the contribution required to the participants in the Focus Group for field research;
- 4) Guided discussion on key issues concerning: *Good practices, specific procedures, results, and possible critical issues linked to the work-placement and the operational entering of the blind and VI workers within the company; Duties, responsibilities and interactions of the blind and VI staff within the business process and the work team; State of art of the culture of accessibility in the company: specific measures and interventions for the logistical and / or organizational adaptation and for the updating of the internal technological and instrumental assets, according to the needs of the blind and partially sighted staff; Possible perspectives for corporate organizational enhancement through ad hoc training plans considering the peculiar needs of blind and VI workers, such as general staff training on good internal collaboration practices, tailored technical/professional training for blind and VI workers on assistive ICTs development for work (needs' detection);*
- 5) Filling of the proper *Focus Group Questionnaire*³⁷ including specific questions on the treated issues for the quali-quantitative data collection.

Results from Labor Services Operators' Focus Group

During the guided discussion, various elements emerged which refer to three main aspects, and namely: a) the quality of the guidance activities for work and/or training; b) the procedures of job placement for blind and partially sighted people; c) the perception that the Operators themselves have of this peculiar category of users and the possible obstacles they meet in managing their working needs emerged. Furthermore, the discussion identified potential developments which could improve the Operators' support action, so as to become more incisive and effective for the requests of the VIP users.

Compared to the main job opportunities to date available/accessible for blind and partially sighted people, a fairly widespread trend has emerged: they are **still placed in traditional professional profiles** (e.g. switchboard operator or masseur), while the possible new areas of employment - opened by the use last assistive ICTs - still have a quite marginal weight and diffusion.

According to the Operators, this is due to several causes connected on one hand with **individual factors** (such as the personal attitude of VIP job-seekers, their individual motivation and the level of information on their own currently available opportunities for professional development), and on the other hand to **systemic factors** (such as the complete circulation among the Labor Services Operators of specific info and steadily updated knowledge concerning job opportunities actually accessible for this category of workers to date, the objective barriers to their placement and the real availability / ability of companies to hire vip workers).

working materials] The templates of the applied researchig tool, named "Focus Group Questionnaire" is available and consultable there.

³⁷ Detail FOCUS GROUP Report of ITALY for RADAR Project: Online Dec 2020 : [Link to Google Drive https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aDFY8TU4B9n8KSmcI_4N30B1_ZsTQUjL - TEAF Repository - complete working materials] The templates of the applied researchig tool, named "Focus Group Questionnaire" is available and consultable there.

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Concerning the latter point, during the discussion it became clear that the reservoir of companies within which open positions are sought for the work placement of VI job-seekers - is represented almost exclusively by companies "**under obligation**", or required by law to hire. In Italy, Law 68/99 (and subsequent amendments) promotes the access and integration of disabled people into the Labor Market through support measures and targeted placement services. These services lead to the recruitment of personnel with different degrees and types of disabilities (including the category of our interest) according to the size and specific features of the company to be done by defined quotas and specific methods.

On the other hand, the companies not included by Law 68/99 represents an almost negligible area, where the open positions to be submitted to the blind or partially sighted worker can be searched, such as employment alternatives, respecting his previous experience, professional profile, course of study / qualification and personal attitudes.

Although there are multiple supporting actions (including tailored financial support measures) to overcome the obstacles limiting the accessibility of these workers to a wider range of work opportunities, the number of micro and/or small-sized companies that access to public calls for such purposes, still remains rather limited. The interventions implemented are not sufficient to guarantee these companies the same employment capacity as the "companies in obligation". In order to push the circulation of the info concerning these supporting actions among the entrepreneurial actors, the Employment Offices also are engaged in information campaigns, targetted at companies centered on these opportunities.

These are made through special dedicated services, showing employers the possible calls for funding aimed to remove architectural barriers or to incentive the adaptation/upgrading of IT equipments, so as to meet the specific needs of disabled workers (specific hardware and software technologies).

Despite the incentives and the possible programs/actions supporting the employability and job placement of blind and VIP, operators warmly underlined the **need to make the entrepreneurial actors more aware of the professional potential that can be experienced by this category of workers** thanks to appropriate technological adjustments which not necessarily are synonymous of costs ("renewal / change of the mentality of private companies, especially those not in obligation").

The other pole of employment attractiveness for the VI job-seekers is certainly the **Public Body**. Public bodies represent the most preferred and requested work option by the target. In fact, the Operators also carefully monitor the calls and open positions to be accessed through a specific public contest and direct their guidance action for VIP towards them. The Operators also noted that - sometimes - workers positively and efficiently placed in private companies leave their jobs in favor of public places, once the relative contests have been won. It underlines how these positions represent one of the work goals most sought by the VI users.

The analysis of the specific category of users emerged from the Employment Services Operators was very interesting, as they find themselves interacting with VI job-seekers in the performance of their various functions. Compared to other disabled users who turn to the Employment Services to find a job, the blind and VIP seem to make more limited use of them. Perhaps they draw on specific and more targeted information for their particular needs from other dedicated sources or services, such as the associations whose core mission is the education, work, re-qualification, mobility and autonomy of these categories. The most frequent requests they do to Operators mostly concern the presence of any public calls for targeted placement.

Starting from the analysis of their daily activities, focusing the management of blind and VI job-seekers' requests, the Operators highlighted several **needs** that, if satisfied, could contribute to improve and/or to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their own daily commitments with these users. One of the main lack expressed by the operators to better carry out the actions for the guidance and the work-placement of the focused target, in fact, is just an adequate update (**targeted training**) on the issues that concern the professional development and new employment areas, today available for blind and VIP.

The needs expressed by the Operators can be grouped into 3 different areas:

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- 1) Availability, diffusion and circulation of the specific information regarding VIP tailored training and work-placement in the new areas opened by the last assistive ICTs;
- 2) Peculiar management strategies for the guidance activities aimed to blind and VI job-seekers;
- 3) Synergies with other Bodies/Associations working within social inclusion policies for blind and VIP.

1) Availability, diffusion and circulation of the specific information regarding VIP tailored training and work-placement in the new areas opened by the last assistive ICTs

The info that Operators have on the opportunities offered to date by the Labor Market (enlarged by the assistive ICTs applying) to blind and VI job-seekers as well as those related to specific and/or professionally tailored training have a scarce systematic updating. As for the training opportunities to be suggested to VI users, the Operators wish to have a more complete overview on the new roles and employment areas disclosed by the last ICTs other than the qualification and updating of traditional professional profiles. Concerning in particular the new employment areas (and the related preparatory training pathways) they should be clearly identified, so as to be able to focus their guidance activities for the users on them.

The improvement of the level of availability and circulation of this information through the ARTI network could constitute a valid support for Operators' activities towards both VI users (becoming more tailored to their particular needs), and companies. Knowing more in deep the main features of assistive ICTs – indeed- can help Operators in carrying out their consultancy actions aimed to companies and entrepreneurial actors on the specific accessibility requirements to be adopted in the work place and/or within the business process.

For this purpose, a list/handbook/database containing such information and easily consultable by the Operators can constitute a valid support. This tool should be capillary spread among the ARTI network and steadily updated and it has to be added to specific training sessions aimed to Operators especially focused on blind and VI users' needs.

2) Peculiar management strategies for the guidance activities aimed to blind and VI job-seekers

Considering the specific features and needs of the VI job-seekers, the Operators must be adequately prepared/trained to manage the more effectively as possible the requests, needs and questions of these users. This tailored preparation should involve all kind of professionals working for Labor Services, according to their roles and tasks: Operators dealing with the first contact and user's profile registration; Operators in charge of more specific supporting actions such as balance of competencies procedures, deepen guidance interventions, accompaniment to placement, etc.; Operators working in targeted placement area for L.68/99.

The acquisition and/or improvement of techniques to welcome and manage blind and partially sighted users, together with some fundamental knowledge on this type of disability, would allow to Operators to better adapt the approach to the specific needs of users and so provide more effective support.

Concerning the operational daily work of Operators, it also emerged how it can be useful to combine group guidance/support interventions with the usual individual one. These specific guidance consultancy actions are aimed to motivate/empower the individual towards the definition of his developmental pathway and possible professional career. The Group interventions should be leaded by a guidance expert and they should involve also other blind and partially sighted people already employed as "key witness". Their real job experiences could contribute to strengthening the individual's motivation and stimulating the interest towards the opportunities offered by the Labor Market and for a full self-realization. In this type of activity, the role of the Operator becomes that of a **facilitator**, who leads the discussion, highlighting the more positive and constructive aspects related to the employment searching.

Even in this case, a tailored training aimed to develop/update the competencies and specific skills for the management of the blind users as well as to perform adequate welcoming and guidance strategies, could constitute a valid support for Operators.

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3) Synergies with other Bodies/Associations working within social inclusion policies for blind and VIP

The Operators wish to strengthen the already existing synergies between the Employment Services and the Bodies and Associations that work to support blind and VIP, at local and / or national level. The improvement of the interactions and exchanges between these two systems would contribute to the strengthening of the Services' networks around these users, making them mutually more effective and integrated.

Through their databases and their specific studies, the Bodies and Associations – indeed- can contribute to keep Operators updated on the last available ICTs for accessible work and the related further employment (and training) opportunities linked to their adoption and use. Furthermore, since according to what emerged from the Operators, blind and VIP turn to ARTI in a fairly limited way and mainly for the search for public places (as well as for any positions open in the targeted placement), the reinforcement of the synergies between Labor Services and Associations would lead to a wider collection and systematization of the overall job and training available opportunities and to a more homogeneous and complete overview of the offers. It should generate a very significant benefit for the users.

The continuous dialogue among Bodies, Associations and Labor Services would also allow to Operators to be able to ask for tailored support to manage peculiar issues or cases requiring more specific or deep interventions of (re) motivation for the users' activation towards their own path of professional development, qualification and work-placement.

Results from Employers' Focus Group

The discussion resulted very interesting thanks to the contributions provided by all the participants. Both those who work with blind employees, and those who do not, have been involved in the focus group. The aim was to: collect information, critical issues and suggestions from those who have experience with blind employees, and understand the difficulties and perplexities of those who have not involved people with visual disabilities. The aim was also to sensitize those who could still have doubts or fears in employing people belonging to a user category which could require special needs.

The discussion was conducted in such a way as to make its contribution on the following key aspects:

- a) issues encountered when including the people with vision disabilities in the company or the public institution;
- b) if the job carried out was compliant to what the company required;
- c) what workplace adjustments are needed.

The participants provided their contributions according to their experience in the company or public institution.

The focus group discussed mainly possible areas of job thanks to the use of new technologies. The interventions were especially aimed at highlighting the obstacles encountered in the inclusion of the employee, the possible solutions, the needs for potential improvements, the suggestions to be included in the results, and so on. Most of the interventions declared having daily interaction with colleagues and employees with visual impairments. This made it possible to deepen and provide more details. In addition, participants were asked to outline their own contributions regarding work, training and support activities.

The discussion revealed the opportunities for various possible vocational employments that could be carried out by people with visual disabilities: researcher (even in technical scientific subjects), different roles in banking and financial sector (banking supervision, bank and financial arbitrator, research survey, etc.), tourism (front office for information, back office for producing reviews, etc.), support in the organization of events and planning (interpreting, organization, editing of project proposals, etc.), and so on. What emerged strongly from the interventions concerns the possibility of defining possible new employment thanks to the opportunities offered by the new ICT technologies.

The interventions highlighted how there can be significant differences between small companies, compared to larger ones which can have many more opportunities to operate.

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With regards to the problems encountered by employers when including the employees with visual impairments, the participants reported a number of aspects which are easy to be managed. The highlighted issues that an employer may face can be summarized in:

- Adaptation of workplace with assistive technologies and required SW configurations;
- Maintenance and adaptation of the user interfaces in terms of accessibility of the internal SW and procedures in order to ensure interaction through assistive technologies;
- Generic and dedicated training for the visually impaired employee;
- Accessibility compliance for the electronic documents, document flows and functional procedures;
- Accessibility compliance for all contents, services and sites used by the company;
- Accessibility compliance for visual contents (videos) used in training courses;
- Difficulties in accessing some video conferencing tools that are especially used in period like the one we are experiencing due to the covid #19;
- Difficulties in shifting and presence coverage required in periods like that one we are living due to the covid #19;

Further interventions provided additional details. The banking and financial sector has specified that dedicated training courses are periodically organized for young people with vision impairments to prepare them for possible roles. Moreover, employees with visual impairments are placed in groups designed to verify the accessibility of all ICT-based procedures in order to allow all workers equally access to the same work tools. Collaborations between colleagues are also encouraged to favor the inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in the work groups. For this purpose, it is also useful to inform sighted colleagues about “what should not be done” when interacting with people with visual impairments. The participants representing Banca di Italia specified that for this purpose an information booklet is provided to prepare their employees when a person with visual impairment is about to be hired.

Colleagues from the tourism sector noted that the usage of enabling technologies can very simply allow people with visual impairment to be hired in the sector. They could provide information to the people (i.e. as front office roles), and to contribute to the development and to the preparation of contents such as reviews (i.e. as back office roles). The reported experience refers to positive examples showing how these vocational employments can be carried out by people with vision impairments.

The two representatives of the research bodies report very positive opinions about the inclusion of their two blind researchers working on scientific topics (computer science and physics). The difficulties encountered by the employers were negligible, limited only to the adaptation of the work station and of the user interfaces for some internal software procedures. The research tasks are very well carried out by the two researchers who have been well integrated into their respective work environments. They also pointed out that this can be possible thanks to the technologies, which are fundamental for their job. Finally, they observed that the period that we are experiencing due to the lockdown is showing how the smart working can greatly simplify those activities which are carried out by the researchers. This can therefore be very useful also to better organize work for people with disabilities in other contexts.

A slightly more specific problems have been identified in the rehabilitation and physiotherapy sector, despite the currently available technologies. In fact, for some of the problems encountered, ICTs are not always able to support some activities which thus still remain difficult to solve. They can be summarized in:

- Difficulties in reading the medical records and reports provided by the patient; thus, there is needs for technologies capable of supporting this type of activity;
- Necessity to arrange the equipment shared between the colleagues in an orderly manner;
- Difficulties in assuring the presence of only one physiotherapist (if with vision impairment) in case of shift for safety reasons in periods such as the one we are experiencing with covid;

- Issues in attending vocational training courses for the physiotherapists with vision impairments due to the visual-based contents.

The participant representing the industries (with no experience with visually impaired employees) expressed that to give a useful contribution, sufficient experience with people with vision impairments would be needed. However, she reported that the companies are certainly open to opportunities to hire people with visual impairments, but what is fundamental is quality and specific training in order to carry out tasks of a certain level. Furthermore, there is a need for more information and training to make employers aware about job opportunities for people with vision impairments.

All the interventions outlined following points:

- Opportunity to identify new (vocational) employments mainly based on ICT technologies capable of supporting and promoting accessibility;
- Need to adapt the workstations with minimal effort (also about the economic aspect);
- Need to design and develop (trying to avoid subsequent interventions) of ICT-based work procedures and services in an accessible way to allow a good interaction with assistive technologies;
- Generic training on new procedures, and targeted training for people with vision disabilities on specific topics in order to be able to use technologies appropriately;
- Inform employers about how visually impaired people can operate for possible new employments and roles;
- Keep always in mind the goal of enhancing the employees' skills to enable people with disabilities to ensure productive and satisfying work for everyone;
- Opportunity to solve many problems or inconveniences with a very minimal effort;
- Encouraging interpersonal relationships between colleagues to allow a better integration and inclusion of visually-impaired employees;
- Organization of conferences and informative events on specific ICT usage and power, accessibility and opportunities for people with disabilities to operate.

Remarks

All the researching materials such as questionnaires' templates, elaboration of survey grids both for Labor Services Operators and Employers, etc. are available and consultable from RADAR TEAF Repository –ITALY Complete working Materials Dec 2020: [Link to Google Drive https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tE5B_TcenOjLuHwRzluHAmpjYWOPd2nU - TEAF Repository – ITALY complete working materials].

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Dutch Desktop Research: Summary

Statistics

a. Describe the target group in demographic categories of blind and VIPs (visually impaired) in your country (age, gender, disability, highest level of education, at school / in work / job seeker / retired, living alone or with parents / in institution, will receive funding. ..).

i. Demographic description:

Source: Hans Limburg, Epidemiology of Visual Impairments and a Demographic Survey, 2007

The number of Dutch people with a visual impairment: approximately 300,000 to 350,000 blind and partially sighted people. The number of blind Dutch people in 2005 was 75,000 and is expected to increase to approximately 84,000 in 2020. The number of visually impaired people in 2005 was approximately 222,000 people. This is expected to increase to 269,000 in 2020. A significant proportion of blind and partially sighted people do not live independently. Of the approximately 75,000 blind people in the Netherlands, more than 33,000 are elderly living in a nursing or care home (approximately 44 percent of all blind people). More than 27,000 blind people are independently living people over 50 (approximately 36 percent).

ii. Demographic information related to work research:

Source: MAP Maastricht, document - Goertz-etal-2010

iii. Factors Related to the Employment of Visually Impaired Persons: A Systematic Literature Review

Yvonne H. H. Goertz, Brigitte A. G. van Lierop, Inge Houkes, and Frans J. N. Nijhuis

Source: Goertz-Houkes-Nijhuis-Bosma-2017-WORK

Factors associated with participation on the competitive labor market of people with visual impairments in The Netherlands, Yvonne H.H. Goertz, Inge Houkes, Frans J.N. Nijhuis and Hans Bosma, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Department of Social Medicine, CAPHRI School for Public Health and Primary Care, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience, Department of Work and Organizational Psychology, Research School Work and Social Psychology, Maastricht University, The Netherlands

iv. Definition 'labor force participation,' according to Central Agency of Statistics (CAS) 2008

"Labor force participation includes the percentage of the potential general working-age population (aged 15–64) that is in or is aspiring to attain paid employment of at least 12 hours a week. Having a paid job often implies wanting to keep the job, and aspiring to have a job often implies wanting to find a job. On the basis of this definition, we chose the key words to find literature for this review."

In the Netherlands, 36.8% of visually impaired people have regular paid work (Goertz et al., 2010) compared to approximately 68% of the general labor force (CAS Statline, 2010, 2017). Since the introduction of the Participation Act, the need to do something about this backlog has only increased (Central Government, 2015).

v. Goertz's research has approached 1064 VIPs. The studies of the last 10 years use this data.

Demographic description:

Source: Hans Limburg, Epidemiology of Visual Impairments and a Demographic Survey, 2007

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- vi. Demographic information related to work research:
Source: MAP Maastricht, document - Goertz-et-al-2010

- vii. *Factors Related to the Employment of Visually Impaired Persons: A Systematic Literature Review*
Yvonne H. H. Goertz, Brigitte A. G. van Lierop, Inge Houkes, and Frans J. N. Nijhuis
Source: Goertz-Houkes-Nijhuis-Bosma-2017-WORK
Factors associated with participation on the competitive labor market of people with visual impairments in The Netherlands, Yvonne H.H. Goertz, Inge Houkes, Frans J.N. Nijhuis and Hans Bosma, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Department of Social Medicine, CAPHRI School for Public Health and Primary Care, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience, Department of Work and Organizational Psychology, Research School Work and Social Psychology, Maastricht University, The Netherlands

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Table J
Descriptives and *t*-/Chi²-tests (*n* = 299)

Variables	M(SD)/%	M(SD)/% working (<i>n</i> = 161)	M (SD)/% non-working (<i>n</i> = 138)	<i>t</i> -/Chi ²
<i>Non-modifiables</i>				
Age	45.65 (12.04)	45.84 (11.64)	45.43 (12.52)	-0.29
Sex				0.65
- men	48.2%	50.3%	45.7%	
- women	51.8%	49.7%	54.3%	
Level of education				21.67*
- low	8.0%	3.1%	13.8%	
- average	56.5%	51.6%	62.3%	
- high	35.5%	45.3%	23.9%	
Living situation				2.62
-living alone	25.4%	29.2%	21.0%	
-living together	74.6%	70.8%	79.0%	
Comorbidity				11.27*
-comorbidity	61.5%	52.8%	71.7%	
-no comorbidity	38.5%	47.2%	28.3%	
Level of visual impairment				7.09*
- low vision	53.2%	60.2%	44.9%	
- very low vision	39.8%	34.2%	46.4%	
- blind	7.0%	5.6%	8.7%	
Age of onset				0.61
- from birth	25.4%	23.6%	27.5%	
- later in life	74.6%	76.4%	72.5%	
<i>Modifiables</i>				
<i>Skills</i>				
Mobility skills				8.40*
- (very) poor	17.7%	11.8%	24.6%	
- reasonable to very good	82.3%	88.2%	75.4%	
Computer skills				1.53
- to some extent/yes	91.3%	93.2%	89.1%	
- no	8.7%	6.8%	10.9%	
Social skills				1.49
- no/hardly	16.7%	14.3%	19.6%	
- somewhat/yes	83.3%	85.7%	80.4%	
<i>Psychological factors</i>				
Acceptance of the visual impairment	35.54 (6.76)	37.15 (5.81)	33.66 (7.31)	-4.52*
Active coping	19.50 (3.27)	20.00 (3.17)	18.91 (3.30)	-2.90*
Optimism	21.71 (3.36)	22.45 (3.17)	20.84 (3.38)	-4.24*
Meaning in life	18.57 (3.55)	18.92 (3.38)	18.16 (3.71)	-1.85
Mental health	24.19 (4.04)	24.71 (3.45)	23.59 (4.57)	-2.37*
Psychosomatic problems	3.68 (3.13)	3.07 (2.80)	4.38 (3.34)	3.63*

**p* < 0.05.

Table K

Pearson's correlations of the modifiable factors (*n* = 299)

<i>Modifiable factors</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Mobility skills	1								
2. Computer skills	-0.24*	1							
3. Social skills	0.11*	-0.19*	1						
4. Acceptance of the visual impairment	0.39*	-0.26*	0.31*	1					
5. Active coping	0.09	-0.17*	0.15*	0.30*	1				
6. Optimism	0.18*	-0.12*	0.21*	0.46*	0.45*	1			
7. Meaning in life	0.14*	-0.10	0.28*	0.41*	0.38*	0.45*	1		
8. Mental health	0.21*	0.02	0.25*	0.46*	0.18*	0.38*	0.38*	1	
9. Psychosomatic problems	-0.23*	0.16*	-0.14*	-0.35*	-0.08	-0.27*	-0.17*	-0.41*	1

**p* < 0.05.

b. Demographic data training:

About 240 pupils leave regular education every year

Source: Sector Education Bartiméus and Visio (guiding young people in regular education)

Each year, approximately 45 students leave Bartiméus' REA college, with offices in Utrecht, Ermelo and Apeldoorn. Only a minority now has a visual impairment.

Source: Rea college on the introduction of labor, May 2020

c. Employment:

Every year, more than 200 customers with a visual impairment and a request for help report to Werkpad. The majority of them have a job, but experience problems from seeing less. Source: Work path introduction to employment, May 2020

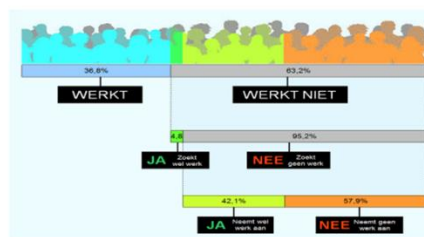
Demographic data Work path and employment:

Source: Work path to Labor action plan (presentation Annelies Lichtenberg May 2020), Percentages via Maastricht University - CAPHRI school for public health and primary care

- Working: 36.8%, of which 9% in sheltered employment.
- Not Working: 63.2%
- Of the unemployed: 4.8% are looking for a job; 95.2% is not looking for work
- Of the jobseeker: 42.1% does accept work, 57.9% does not accept work
- People who can work: approximately 40,000-60,000
- Annually on the labor market: 240 young people (school leavers, no documentation on this).

B:

Research university of Maastricht



Stakeholders

d. List the different government agencies working for the blind and VIPs in your area and their main focus (education, healthcare, labor market integration) - if applicable. The government agencies working for the blind and VIP are the local municipalities and the Ministries of:

- Health Wellbeing and Sports
- Education Culture and Science
- Social affairs and Employment

e. List the different educators in your country who work for the blind and VIP, and analyze if they are ONLY dealing with blind and VIP or if they ALSO work for our target audience - if there are any.

Bartiméus, Visio, Kentalis, Rea College, Robert Coppes Foundation

f. Are there traditional employers for the blind and VIPs in the job market?

It's almost hard to speak about traditional employers. The sheltered work forms and government, tax authorities and police are employers who hire more blind and VIP persons than others.

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g. Can you analyze and describe their role and potential?

The governmental organizations feel the urgency, social responsibility to employ people with a disability.

Traditionally, these employers are more open to people with a disability in general and a relatively large number of people with a visual impairment work there. Because these organizations are more familiar with the possibilities and the preconditions there is less fear of cold water. For sheltered work, an indication must grant access to a sheltered work form. An employee should be able to claim a place. This does not always guarantee a quick intake. A number of sheltered work forms also experience many problems in offering work to people with a visual impairment. It is possible that people are on the waiting list for up to 10 years, because the organization is unable to create a place due to a lack of knowledge.

h. What are the different end-user organizations for the blind and VIPs operating in your country?

i. What is their scope and are you aware of the context in which they help our target audience / our project results?

Both organizations have been working nationwide for some time. Until recently the Netherlands was divided by both organizations. There are, however, strong regional differences. The organizations both see a lot of customers, but not the entire target group is served by these organizations. Both organizations find themselves losing contact after high school. As a result, the organizations have too little insight into what young people are going to do after school and how many of them succeed in finding a paid job. The work departments of both organizations do see more people who are working, than people who are searching for work (although the group of people without work is twice as big as the one with a job).

j. List about different job market providers for the blind and VIPs in your area - if any and analyze their experience (how long have they been working, how many clients, success factors from publications).

In addition to Bartiméus Werkpad and Visio, there are various providers: Refrisk, C-talent, Buro Obol, Inklusie, but also regular companies that guide people to work because they know the local market well or are familiar with guiding people with an occupational disability in the general, such as USG Restart, Wajongtalenten, etc.

k. What do you think about blind people and VIPs in your country?

The target group visually impaired and blind in the Netherlands is just as diverse as the average Dutch population and differs in education, interest, capacity and compensation strategies. The majority have a wide range of resources. Nevertheless, too little attention is paid to instructional use of a tool (in the workplace), as a result of which people do not make the production they can make and experience fatigue complaints that can be prevented by the correct use of the tools. The second similarity is that the group sees less and that employers are unfamiliar with the target group. This means that employers mainly think in terms of problems instead of opportunities and doors often remain closed to people from the target group. In addition the social skills of the group may play a roll in finding and keeping a job. This is less important for the people who followed regular education, non institutionalized people.

l. Name other stakeholders for the blind, VIPs and the disabled in general.

- Interest association: the eye association and patient associations (LOA, Macula association, Usher etc)

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- Organizations specific to the target group: Visio, Bartiméus, Robert Coppens
- Care for the target group: eye clinic, ophthalmologists (both hospitals and private companies such as the Bergman clinic) for ophthalmic care and Visio, Bartiméus and Robert Coppers for rehabilitation (with Loo Erf as an intramural rehabilitation center), living, daytime activities and education. Bartiméus and Visio also offer diagnostics within ophthalmic care, specializing in diagnostics for rare disorders.
- Funding benefits: UWV and local Municipality
- Funding Healthcare: Long-term care (care office related to government), Health insurances related to insurance agencies and WMO (social support Law) subsidized by the local government.
- The policy is made by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport; the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Studies

m. Are there traditional job areas for the blind and VIPs in your area?

The old school traditional jobs were: matting seats, telephone operator, receptionist. Nowadays its more general Administration, ICT jobs, sociale jobs and supporting services

n. Are there any emerging job areas for the blind and VIPs in your country?

Call centers with client contact and / or customer advice, options in ICT (use of ICT and robots / technology), policy makers.

o. What are the different obstacles and barriers to the employment of the blind and VIPs?

Accessible equipment, negative experience with employees with disabilities, hassle of bureaucracy - unfamiliar with the possibilities of subsidies and regulations, unfamiliar with possibilities of the blind and VIP (see more problems than challenges).

p. Find the impact analysis of employment for the blind and VIP.

Source: Maintaining a job, With knowledge to practice, Diana Kole, Vilans 2009

Source: Workbook Maintaining a job, Brigitte van Lierop and Nathalie Janssen, Hoensbroek 2007

Effects that are directly related to having a job: more self-esteem in the employee with subsequent fewer government costs for welfare / benefits and care (e.g. depression)

Find more under point R below.

q. Find the uses, offerings and accessibility of assistive technology for blind and VIP people.

- o Workplace customizations (custom software): NVDA, Jaws, Zoomtext, Fusion, Supernova
- o Screen magnifiers
- o Daisy players and apps
- o Magnifying glasses and telescopic magnifying glasses
- o Reading devices

r. Find the level of job satisfaction of blind and VIPs, their colleagues and their employers.

- i. *Source: Expedition ToP (Sabina Kef, Visio 2017, VU Educational Sciences), Success factors for work for young people, growth mindset*

This research shows that visually impaired young people have a high level of ambition and see plenty of opportunities. Their environment is insufficiently empowering in this respect and protects the young person from disappointments, which means that young people do not always pursue their ambition, but are satisfied with their second choice, because it seems more realistic,

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according to supervisors and sometimes also parents. Amazingly, young people who ignore their supervisors go far beyond what supervisors expect. Counselors can therefore be an inhibiting factor. Doing what you like does still generate a great deal of job satisfaction.

In addition, some time ago research has been conducted into the satisfaction of visually impaired people in the workplace, compared to their direct supervisors. (Maintaining a job, Brigitte van Lierop and Nathalie Janssen).

The conclusion from this study is that many visually impaired employees have a positive assessment of their capabilities and motivation. Their managers have that too, but slightly less positively. A significant number of VIPs think that they have to prove themselves twice in the work situation, which is shared to a limited extent by the manager. A small proportion think they make more mistakes / take revenge more slowly. The limitation is taken into account in the division of tasks. The disability is accepted in the companies, yet important information is not always accessible.

An important factor in finding and keeping work is a good match between the work and the ability of a visually impaired person to perform this work. For the employee, in addition to the suitability of the position, the challenge in the work is an important element to achieve specific job. The manager allows himself / herself in his selection process in addition to the suitability of the job is mainly guided by motivation, professional knowledge and experiential expertise and the communication skills of a person with a visual impairment.

Visually impaired people seem to identify more strongly with employees without a disability than employees who are blind. For example, the visually impaired employee finds it more difficult to ask for help and he finds to a greater extent that he must be able to do everything himself. The manager makes a relative judgment more often negative about his skills than about the skills of the blind employee. Apparently a better estimate is made of a blind employer the work-related possibilities, while for the visually impaired employee the limitation and the work implications of the disability for both the employee and the manager is less clear.

Highly motivated employees are rated better than employees with relatively less motivation. A determining distinction in the manager's judgment is that this of the relatively less motivated employee more often thinks that they can do less well dealing with his disability and is less solution-oriented. The less motivated employee is seen as someone who has less specialist knowledge, less good copes with changes, is less flexible and less solution-oriented. Lower motivated employees also seem to complain more as more motivated employees and find that they are less accepted with their disabilities. If an employer is satisfied with the employee, his personal characteristics are assessed more positively. If the manager is less satisfied with the employee is he also less positive about the indicators for work behavior (work pace te high, more errors, only function in a fixed structure). Visually impaired employees with a lower education level have one more positive judgment about their verbal ability, social skills and commitment of their capabilities. Apparently people with a lower level of education seem to be at greater risk to have overconfidence. Older employees estimate their personal qualities higher than their supervisors and see themselves as more solution-oriented, flexible, have social skills than their supervisor. At the same time they feel more often that they should prove themselves twice. It is striking that there are no differences between men and women with visual restrictions.

Advice for job search and retention (Output of the research Maintaining a Job):

1. A first important point is that employees with a visual impairment are aware should be aware of the implications of their limitations in the work situation. For the manager this means that he must give good feedback on the manner to which the employee acts with his limitations in the work situation. This allows misunderstandings can be prevented in the long term. In addition, it is crucial that a employee can estimate what is expected of him, in order to avoid him for example has the feeling of having to prove himself twice. For the manager it is important that an employee is flexible, solution-oriented and cooperative thinks with changes. These kinds of skills must also be especially during the vocational training.
2. It also appears that asking for help emerges as an aspect where there are many differences in assessment of existence. Visually impaired employees must be taught be asking for help, but at the same time learning to develop a behavior that it asking for help is seen as positive. This also means discussing this kind problems with your own colleagues.
3. Visually impaired people will have to learn to deal with their disability; the fact that there some vision remaining seems to lead to too high expectations both the manager a nd the person with disabilities himself. The results show that a supervisor can be tempted to treat a person with and to assume visual impairment, if he can estimate the implications of the visual impairment for the work to be performed, and the person with a visual impairment disability has a strong motivation, a broad professional knowledge and experiential expertise and sufficient social and communication skills. This implies that a reintegration process must focus on work-related as well as on general communication skills To keep an employee with visual impairments for work, that applies to work
4. must be challenging and that it must be tailored to the visual impairment. Not only the employer sets requirements for the employee, but the employee also has his own desires. It is to achieve a lasting and successful cooperation relationship therefore it is necessary that the work meets the requirements and needs of the employee and the employer's requirements and needs.

s. Name other blind and VIP surveys available in your country.

- Final evaluation of the Participation Act, Maroesjka Versantvoort (ed.) Social and Cultural Planning Office, The Hague 2019 Regioplan, UWV;
- Final report Young disabled people Sustainably at Work, 2018, Publication no. 17014 Regioplan
- UWV Final report More workplaces at employers, 2013, Publication no. 1990 OND 1342366

Support schemes

t. Describe the AT service plans available in your country.

Adapted aids, provided by UWV (for education) and the municipality (since 2015) and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport The tools consist of: Screen reading software (magnification and speech output), Braille displays, (screen) magnifiers, Daisy player and apps, magnifying glasses and telescope glasses, lighting, transport facilities and job coaching

u. What are the different special education courses for blind and VIPs in your country?

Visio, Bartiméus with schools for special education (primary and secondary education) and outpatient support for young people attending mainstream education. In addition, Bartiméus has the REA college, where young people through the Labor Market qualify at MBO level are taught work processes that are in demand on the labor market. They are also outsourced by the job coaches of the REA college.

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v. What are the different types of financial support plans available to the blind and VIP?

The target group is entitled to workplace facilities that make it possible to do their work, support at the workplace by a job coach and a transport facility to get to work (when they are not mobile enough or the work is in an inaccessible place) The disadvantage is that the application for the workplace facilities usually takes a lot of time.

w. What are the available support schemes that benefit employers for hiring blind and VIPs in their organization?

- No-risk policy: the UWV or the municipality takes over the obligation to continue payment of wages from the employer when the employee reports sick.
- Wage cost benefit: if you hire someone from the Wajong Act, you will receive an allowance of € 1.01 per hour paid, with a maximum of € 2,000 per year.
- Trial placement: if there is doubt whether person and position are a good match, a trial placement can be started. The employee will then start working for 2 months with full benefits and will not receive any wages from the employer.
- Wage cost subsidy: if a visually impaired / blind person cannot earn the minimum wage due to less production, the wage cost subsidy reimburses the difference between the wage value and the minimum wage.
- Guidance / support in the workplace through a job coach. A job coach can be assigned if an employee needs extra guidance in the workplace, for example with training, ensuring that the mutual communication runs smoothly, someone who looks at how the tasks can best be performed, etc. The job coach can be an employee from a municipality, but can also be someone from a job coaching organization hired by the municipality or the UWV.
- "Low Income Benefit" gives employers compensation for low-income workers. This lowers wage costs and can encourage retention of the employee. The allowance is a maximum of € 1,000 per month and is automatically paid by the tax authorities.

x. Describe best practices of blind and VIP use support schemes.

"The" example does not exist. Practice is always unruly. It remains custom work between company, employee, position / tasks and adjustments. When it is clear what needs to be achieved, the application usually takes another 2 months. A positive exception to this is the national police, which has agreements with suppliers and therefore has all modifications in house within a week.

y. What are the different education and counseling support programs available to blind and VIPs in your area?

The UWV offers support to people on disability benefits for retraining and for examinations / diagnostics to discover which work best suits the person, capacities, interests, personality and visual abilities. The studies are carried out by the career advice center of Bartiméus Werkpad or by Visio.

Education is generally included in regular training. For those who are unable to do this, a route / shortened route at the REA college may be an alternative.

z. List the different supported and supportive blind and VIP employment schemes available in your country.

The arrangements to get back to work are paid by the UWV (if you receive benefits from the UWV) or by the municipality. In the case of the municipality, an employee of the municipality will usually provide guidance to work. A few municipalities enlist the help of an expertise organization (Visio, Bartiméus Werkpad, Refrisk, C-talents, Bureau Obol, Inclusvisie).

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For working people, the employer is responsible for guidance on their own work or to other work when their own work is no longer possible. The employer can be supported by health and safety organizations or/and re-integration companies.

aa. What are the inclusive and accessible job employment resources available in your area for the employment of the blind and VIPs?

Workplace adjustments (adapted software), Braille reading rules Screen magnifiers Daisy players and apps Magnifying glasses and telescopic magnifying glasses Lighting Transportation facilities Job coaching.

bb. What are the different work support services for blind and VIPs in your area? I

If people are eligible, they can work in a sheltered form of work. In addition, social activation, trajectories to become work-fit or guided trajectories to paid work can be used. Once at work, a job coach can also help solve common problems in the workplace, simplify the onboarding process or bring communication on the work floor to a halt.

cc. Name the other support plans available for the blind and VIP.

If necessary, training can be used to, for example, learn to work non-visually or other matters that are important to be able to work as an employee. Legislation, policy and administration.

[Legislation, Policy and administration](#)

dd. Name the policy maker who works for the blind and VIP. The Ministries Health, Education and Social affairs and employment.

ee. What are the different social security laws and support for blind and VIPs in your area?

Wajong, Support for Disabled Young People Act (until 2015 for all young people with an occupational disability, from 2015 only accessible for young people who are permanently disabled) The Participation Act for young people with an occupational disability (from 2015) for people on social assistance benefits.

WIA / WAO for (ex-)workers who have become incapacitated for work during their work.

ff. What different laws and policies are there for the blind and VIPs in the education sector?

1. Appropriate education: All pupils must be given a place in a school that suits their qualities and their capabilities. Schools therefore offer extra support to students who need this to be able to complete their education successfully.
2. Special education: Special education is for pupils who need specialist or intensive educational supervision. There is special primary education (SBO), special education (SO) and special secondary education (VSO).
3. The rectification of the UN treaty of Handicap behavior by the Netherlands in 2016 means that all education must be accessible to people with an occupational disability. This convention means that much has been improved in schools. Taylor made solutions are possible.

gg. What are the different laws, policies, and administration for blind and VIP employment?

There are allowances for employers, see above. Possibilities for routes (see above). The administration is carried out by the UWV (for young people who turned 18 before 2015 and for employees who dropped out and were rejected due to their disability). The others are under the administration of the local (municipality) government.

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hh. What are the different legislations, available policies to combat discrimination against blind and VIP?

The rectification of the UN treaty, and article 1 of the constitution which is based on equal treatment and which states that discrimination and incitement to discrimination is prohibited.

ii. What are the different laws and policies that are accessible to blind and VIPs?

All laws and policies should be accessible to the entire population.

jj. What are the laws and available policies for assistive technologies for the blind and VIP?

To our knowledge, there is no policy for assistive technologies. It is true, however, that new technologies that can support work can be applied for by people from the target group and that it is examined on a case-by-case basis what the effectiveness is and whether someone can work independently as a result. In addition, there is a regulation that these facilities for the target group with a sensory disability are provided to the employee themselves instead of to the employer. Upon departure, the employee can take the facilities with him and immediately use them with another employer

kk. What are the laws and policies for personal assistance for blind and VIPs?

People with an occupational disability can use the support of a job coach. This person can be used as a supervisor for up to 15% of the working time per week. The guidance can consist of providing support in getting into a new position or learning new tasks. The support can also exist to work on the social and / or communication skills of the employee. The support can also be used to increase productivity (this is an option if use is made of wage cost subsidy)

kk. Name other laws, policies and administration available to the blind and VIP.

We feel we have named everything.

Name other sources.

Vision @ Work, The development and a practical test of an application to screen the labor market opportunities for people with a visual impairment, Final report project 94304002 for ZonMW, Dr. Inge Houkes, Dr. Albine Moser, Prof. Dr. Hans Bosma, March 2017

Powerful and Vulnerable, Klabbbers2014_1 May, Research into the experiences with labor and social participation of people with chronic diseases and disabilities; Dr. Gonnie Klabbbers, Drs. Bram Rooijackers, Drs. Yvonne Goertz, Dr. Angelique de Rijk

<http://www.bartimeus.nl/>

<https://www.visio.org/en-en/home>

<http://www.zichtbaarinwerk.nl/>

<https://www.werkpad.nl/>

Other Studies submitted with document

	Study Name	Year	Description
1	More workplaces at Employers	1990	Literature review in the context of the evaluation and monitoring of the 'Working according to capacity' pilots, pilot 1
2	See and be seen	2018	Nature and extent of perceived obstacles, needs and desired solutions for participation of people with a visual impairment
3	Young handicapped Durable to it Work	2018	This report gives an account of the first part of the project, namely a study that identifies the factors that contribute to job retention and return to work after previous work experience of
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			young disabled people.
4	Factors Related to the Employment of Visually Impaired Persons: A Systematic Literature Review by Yvonne H. H. Goertz, Brigitte A. G. van Lierop, Inge Houkes, and Frans J. N. Nijhuis	2010	The aim of this systematic review of the literature is to increase understanding of the factors that influence the labor force participation of persons who are visually impaired.
5	Factors associated with participation on the competitive labour market of people with visual impairments in The Netherlands by Yvonne H.H. Goertza, Inge Houkesa, Frans J.N. Nijhuis,b and Hans Bosmaa	2017	To identify modifiable factors associated with participation on the competitive labour market of PVI's (people with visual impairments). Based on the findings, we aim to develop an individual assessment instrument for determining the odds of labour market success of PVI's.
6	With knowledge to practice	2009	Elements that are important for retaining a job for employees with a visual impairment.
7	ON THE WAY TO ONE EFFECTIVE RE-INTEGRATION OF LABOR RESTRICTIONS Lessons for municipalities Authors: Drs. M. Groenewoud Drs. L. Mallee Dr. M. Witvliet Drs. M. Blommesteijn	2014	Lessons for municipalities
8	Expedition Top: promoting success in job-participation of adolescents with visual impairments Authors: Sabina Kef & Judith Wijnen	2017	promoting success in job-participation of adolescents with visual impairments
9	VISIBLE IMPACT	2018	The pilot project Visible in Work emerged from this and has the support of the Ministry of Social Affairs, SBCM, Instituut Gak and Bartiméus.
10	Vision @ Work	2017	The development and a practical test of an application to screen the labor market opportunities for people with a visual impairment

11	Final report project 'Visible in Work'	2019	The pilot project Visible in Work emerged from this and has the support of the Ministry of Social Affairs, SBCM, Instituut Gak and Bartiméus.
12	What do we buy for whom?	2020	Content and success of purchased reintegration services for people with an occupational disability

Table L: Other Studies submitted with document

Dutch Key Witness Report: Summary

RADAR questionnaire		
	First questions	
A.	Have you had contact with blind and visually impaired people? a. Already b. Nee	
B.	Where have you had contact with visually impaired and blind people? A. Environment B. Training c. Steunregelingen	
C.	How familiar are you with visually impaired and blind people? A. Very little b. weed C. Neutral D. Many E. A lot	
D.	How often do you meet visually impaired and blind people? A. Once a year B. Once a month C. Once a week D. Daily	
	Statistics	
a.	<p>Wat is uw idee over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the number of people who are blind or visually impaired in our country, - how many people who are blind or visually impaired can work according to you; - do you know how many % of people who are blind or visually impaired have work; - what do you think the level of education is of people who are visually impaired or blind compared to the average level of education. <p>Do you know how education is organised for people who are visually impaired or blind? Do you know about Work/Work for people who are visually impaired or blind?</p>	
b.		
c.		
	Stakeholders:	
D.	What are the different (government) institutions that work for visually impaired and blind people in our country?	
And.	What are the different trainers in our country who work for visually impaired and blind people?	
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f.	Who are the potential employers for visually impaired and blind people?	
g.	What are the different client organizations that are active in our country for visually impaired and blind people?	
h.	What do you think are the different labour market providers for visually impaired and blind people?	
i.	What is your image in visually impaired and blind people?	
J.	Can you name a few other stakeholders for visually impaired and blind people?	
	Studies	
k.	Are there traditional professions for the visually impaired and blind in our country?	
L.	Are there emerging professions in our country for the visually impaired and blind?	
m.	What are the various obstacles and obstacles in work for the visually impaired and blind?	
N.	What do you think are best practices (what helps) for work for the visually impaired and the blind?	
The.	What are the cons and cons of adopting the visually impaired and blind?	
p.	What is your opinion on the use, offer and accessibility of assistive technology/tools for visually impaired and blind people?	
q.	How do you rate the work satisfaction levels of visually impaired and blind people in general? I. Low ii. Medium iii. Hoog	
r.	How do you rate the work satisfaction levels of visually impaired and blind people in your area? I. Low ii. Medium iii. Hoog	
s.	Do you know research on working with a visual impairment and would you like to report it here?	

	Support Schemes	
t.	What are the different support schemes for technological support/tools for visually impaired and blind people?	
u.	What are the different special education schemes available to visually impaired and blind people?	
V.	What are the different financial supportschemes for visually impaired and blind people?	
w.	What are the available schemes and subsidies that benefit employers for hiring visually impaired and blind people in their organisation?	
x.	What are well-functioning support schemes for working with a visual impairment? Think of, for example, sheltered work, work experience places/participation jobs, self-employed or regular work.	
And.	What are the different education and coaching support programs available to visually impaired and blind people in your country?	
Z.	What are the accompanying and sheltered working methods for visually impaired and blind people?	
aa.	What are the inclusive and accessible tools for finding work (such as a work website) available to visually impaired and blind people?	
bb.	What help can people who are visually impaired or blind get in finding or keeping work?	
Cc.	Is there anything else you'd like to say about support programs for visually impaired and blind people?	
	Legislation, policies and implementing organisations	
dd.	Which ministry is responsible for the policy for working with a visual impairment.	
ee.	What are the different social security laws and support for visually impaired and blind people in our country?	
Ff.	What are the different laws and policies for visually impaired and blind people in the education sector?	
gg.	What are the different laws, policies and implementation organisations for blind and VIP employment?	
hh.	What are the different laws, the policy available to combat discrimination against visually impaired and blind people?	
ii.	What are the different laws and policies on accessibility?	

jj.	What are the legislation and policies available for assistive technologies for visually impaired and blind people? When do people have the right to make adjustments/tools?	
kk.	What are the legislation and policies for personal assistance for visually impaired and blind people? (school, work and leisure).	
ll.	Is there anything else you would like to say about other laws, policies and administrations that are available to visually impaired and blind people?	
mm.	Is there anything else you'd like to say about getting and staying at work with people who are visually impaired?	
Tool to collect demographic data from participants		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which category best suits you as a stakeholder for visually impaired work? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employer ○ Part of government agency that works for visually impaired and blind people ○ Policy maker for visually impaired and blind people ○ Educators for visually impaired and blind people ○ Member of blind and VIP organization ○ Labour market provider for visually impaired and blind people ○ End-user ○ Different _____vermelden 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeftijd _____ 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Visually impaired (b) Blind (c) Other 	
	Level of education: __ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ _____ _____ 	
	Geographic location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ _____ 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail address: _____ 	

Summary of interview conversations with key players

There have been conducted in-depth interviews with 8 people who play various and relevant roles in the field of working with a visual impairment.

The participants were

- The policy officer for visual aids of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the ministry responsible for working with a disability.
- The national staff member disability of employment support from UWV (Dutch Public Employment Services).
- The project manager 'working' for the Eye Association, the advocacy association for people who are visually impaired or blind and she herself is an experience expert and has been working as a Human Resource Manager in the Social Work Service.
- A highly experienced ambulatory education expert who supervises young visually impaired people during their secondary school term.
- Communication consultant - also responsible for providing accessible communication and information from Bartimeus, herself an experience expert.
- Experienced lobbyist of the Foundation Inclusion, who wants to realize inclusion through relevant and accessible work by and for people with a physical, auditory or visual disability.
- Director of the Labour Centre, an association of professionals, focused on quality and competence development of labour experts.
- Experienced legal policy officer at the national government, also an expert in experience.

The main conclusions:

General:

The people who, as a matter of government, bear responsibility for policy-making (SZW) and implementation (UWV) hardly know people who are visually impaired or blind in their private life. Sometimes at work they meet visually impaired people but it are still the same people.

Figures:

The figures on the numbers of people who are visually impaired or blind in the Netherlands are poorly known, including among key players.

The figures on the numbers of people who can work and are working are very outdated (Maastricht University 2010 research) and hardly anyone knows this figures.

Stakeholders:

All interviewed are well aware of the arrangements and the organisations involved with the people with visual impairments. The key players also know who has which role.

Education and the employability of labour market:

Remarkably, most key players think that people with visual impairments are less well educated than the average. This is incorrect: in the Netherlands, people who are visually impaired or blind and can work have the same level of education as the rest of the workers.

In secondary schools, too little attention is often paid to the labour market opportunities or employability of young people. This applies to all young people, including those with visual impairments. For this group, it is extra important to look at the work opportunities and what it takes to find work in time. More attention for this subject, reinforces the self-reliance of young people with a visual impairment. It works empowering.

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Most key players have little ideas of the functions that can be fulfilled by people with visual impairments. Most think of financial-administrative work, telephony and other sedentary work. Others only think of Social Work.

Most key players believe that technological advances can lead to more work opportunities for people with visual impairments. They can only name very few concrete professions.

Supporting measurements:

The participants see technological progress as positive, but often there are problems with the financing of technical aids. Also, the use of the tools is not optimal because there is insufficient instruction for the use of the tools. Customization and knowledge of the resources is lacking due to the decentralization of the allocation of facilities and support to the municipalities. They are often unaware of their responsibility or do not have the necessary knowledge to arrive at good support/guidance and to provide tools.

Many schemes are good (work experience, sheltered work, etc) provided there is customization. For a good 'match' for working with a visual impairment, it is important that the work fits well with the qualities and motivation of a potential employee with a visual impairment. We don't need to look at what can't be done.

In case of a possible vacancy for someone with a visual impairment, it is necessary to look at an early stage whether the automation/ICT can be made accessible. Due to internationalisation, more and more companies have positioned their ICT management abroad. This often makes it difficult to make technical adjustments in the context of accessibility.

As more and more companies implement significant security measures for their software, the software is more difficult to make accessible to employees who are visually impaired or blind.

Updates to the software often do not take into account the access that was previously arranged.

The Participation Act shifts responsibility for the arrangements and support of people with disabilities from the state government and UWV to municipalities. Since the group of people with a visual impairment is small, it is difficult as a municipality to build knowledge about this. The guidance and support is not yet going according to plan.

Legislation and policy:

- The participation law – job agreement – quota law creates crowding out for people with visual impairments. Most of them are not covered by the job arrangement because they are not listed in the target group register.
- Young people find it difficult to get a job, often multiple jobs have to be tried before the young person is well placed. The legislation gives few opportunities for support.
- People who become partially sighted or blind in later life and therefore become partially incapacitated have no possibility of receiving personal guidance when looking for work. They can only make use of the digital support capabilities of the government/UWV.

Dutch Focus Group: Summary

Questionnaires focus group mediators and coaches working with a visual impairment.

Focus Group Content:

Content meeting: proposals and three themes

1. Support and support staff at work.

- Which support is most important/needed for the target audience? Custom? Which items come back often?
- Who should provide this support?
- What's going well? What is missing from support?
- If only 1/3e vd target group works, it is realistic to think that the current supporters can increase this to e.g. 2/3e

2. Connection Education and Labour Market

- Is the way in which our education is designed to help the target group to get a job?
- What do you see as the traditional blind (visually impaired) profession? Are there new, emerging professions that are specifically very suitable for the target group? Do we get enough into that?
- What are the main obstacles and barriers to getting people into work?
- What or where are good examples?
- Does assistive technology help to a sufficient extent? Is it being used enough? Is the target group adequately instructed when using tools/technology?
- Considering all this, is this enough to get more people toe work (from 1/3rd to 2/3rd)eor ismore needed?

3. Legislation and implementing rules:

- What works well on the law of appropriate education?
- What is hindering the law's appropriate education?
- Ambulatory educational support is not provided throughout the school period?
- What gaps do you see in this legislation? What's missing?
- What support laws and regulationswork (stimulatingly) in finding/keeping work?
- What legislation is obstructive?
- What gaps do you see in the legislation? What's missing?

Summary of focus group Labor Services Operators and coaches

A focus group was held on Thursday 2 July 2020 with eight labor services operators, coaches and other stakeholders.

The participants were:

- A Visio work advisor / job coach also involved in pilots for Inclusion and Technology together with UWV
- A teacher / internship supervisor for Secondary Special Educatie from Bartiméus;
- A teacher / counselor of the REA college, secondary vocational education for young people who, due to the nature of their disability, can not attend regular education
- A Visio job coach / occupational expert
- An employment advisor Intensive Services of UWV
- A coördinator of Werkpad, mediation organization of Bartimeus and Kentalis

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- A consultant / job coach from Werkpad, mediation organization of Bartimeus and Kentalis
- An employee of one of the suppliers Lexima-Reinecker

The questions asked were based on an in advance prepared questionnaire, which was based on the questions from JKU and divided into three categories:

1. Support and supporters in get down to work
2. Connection between education and the labor market
3. Legislation and implementation rules

The main conclusions:

1. *Support and supporters in get down to work*

Most important in support to get down to work is:

- Check in advance whether the workplace can be made sufficiently suitable and accessible. This prevents many disappointments, both for employers and candidates.
- Pay attention to (re)orientation, what are the possibilities given the talents and limitations. Together give direction to the opportunities and possibilities that do exist.
- Provide correct information to employers, they often think that people with a visual impairment can no longer do anything. Statements for example : 'I would never be able to go to work if I could not see' and 'how can you e-mail if you can not see anything'.
- Provide the same information to colleagues, they often do not know what the possibilities are.
- Make clear that an employee with a disability is more than just his or her disability, it is also a colleague with opportunities.

What can be improved:

- Job coaching when someone is posted, for the employer, the colleagues and the new employee.
- What is lacking is support regardless of the type of benefit someone has.
- At European level, the supporting software should be compatible with each other and with the major user systems. A lot of time is now spent on making it compatible. There should be European accessibility standards for the major software programs.
- At this moment there is no right to a facility or special aid for a trial placement which creates opposition. It is important that this option is going to be available.
- How do you get a better view on the people who do not work but want to work among the labor service operators? Congregations do not have the information, they are not allowed to register for a disability. UWV does have information about facilities (educational and among people who have become incapacitated) , but are not allowed to share this for privacy reasons .
- There must be more possibilities for workplace research. This now often does not happen when granting a facility to the workplace. The result is that the facility is insufficient and the support of an employee who is visually impaired or blind is not optimal.
- Many young people who are visually impaired or blind are so disappointed in the early years of their working life that they give up their job search. Earlier guidance could provide more opportunities for sustainable placement.
- Employers are sometimes very rigid and do not want to make adjustments at the task level in a position. This causes the match to crash.
- Young people can be empowered more. Sometimes others think and do too much for them. They may be able to organize their own job market and introduce themselves to employers.
- The connection with suppliers must be closer. Facilities must be available more quickly. Couldn't Bartimeus and Visio have their own library with the most relevant tools that can be used at the start of employability? Afterwards settlement with UWV can take place.

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2. *Connection between education and the labor market*

- In education checking reality often comes too late. There are only practical internships in the third year. As a result, the confrontation with reality often comes (too) late. Young people then notice what it takes to be able to work, it concerns both their skills and their resources. If they start earlier on an internship, they more capable of making a realistic choice for the future.
- There should be more psychosocial research done amongst young people with visual impairment. The young person knows his talents and knows what support is needed to be able to work. This research can narrow the gap between dream and reality in young people. It is also important that the young person continues to follow his or her dream.
- Now sometimes young people who build up a substantial student debt for a study that is not possible with their (progressive) disorder. That should be addressed earlier at school.
- Educationally the focus is still too much on the interest of the young person, while it is also necessary to consider what is possible in practice and in which profession there is work to be found. This does not mean that the supporter decides what the young person can do and wants to do. A talent expedition such as at REA can help.
- Information should be provided for deans at MBO, HBO and WO level about working with a visual impairment. There is already a connection between Accessibility and the HBO about accessibility. This could be expanded with information about going to work.
- Also look carefully at professions that are about to disappear. There are still relatively many people who are trained in financial-administrative or legal skills, at MBO level that will be increasingly automated.
- Traditional professions are telephony and business services which often find more in government than in business.
- New is sports massage, legal services, education, communication and ICT.
- Good example of possible professions can be found via the SBB site, they indicate what the work options are and what is needed.
- There are many new technological possibilities, such as the Orcam glasses . Gardeners and care workers have now been helped.
- There must be more customization in the allocation of the facilities, what suits this employee best and not what is cheapest. Unification in the allocation must be improved.
- The instruction / training in allocating a facility is too limited. Especially people who become visually impaired / blind and have to learn to work non-visually and sometimes also do other work. They need more time is to learn the new skills and make optimal use of the facility.
- Non-visual work and the use of aids are part of the rehabilitation. When people go back to work, after some time they must receive extra training for the optimal use of the aids focussed on sustainable placement. This should be paid by UWV.
- The low-vision specialists are often insufficiently familiar with the newer aids and their applicability. It includes much more than is currently used.
- All support staff, concerned healthcare workers and teachers should be better informed with the technological innovations that new tools are providing. This would allow more people to continue to work who are now (declared) completely incapacitated for work.

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Questionnaires focus group employers about working with a visual impairment.

Focus Group Content:

Content meeting: proposals and three themes

General questions:

- a. What are the most important topics for you when hiring people with visual impairments?
 - b. What could help employers hire more visually impaired people?
1. *Support and support staff at work.*
 - What support is most important/most needed to hire someone with a visual impairment? Custom? Which items come back often?
 - Who offers that support in you?
 - What's going well? What is missing from support?
 - If only 1/3rd target group works, it is realistic to think that this can be increased to e.g. 2/3th with additional/better support or support
 2. *Connection Education and Labour Market*
 - Is the way in which our education is designed to help the target group to get a job?
 - What do you see as the traditional blind (visually impaired) profession? Are there new, emerging professions that are specifically very suitable for the target group? Do we get enough into that?
 - What are the main obstacles and barriers to getting people into work?
 - What or where are good examples?
 - Does assistive technology help to a sufficient extent? Is it being used enough? Is the target group adequately instructed when using tools/technology?
 - Considering all this, is this enough to get more people to work (from 1/3rd to 2/3rd) or is more needed?
 3. *Legislation and implementing rules:*
 - Are you dealing with the law of appropriate education? If so, what is working well on that, what is obstructing the law of appropriate education?
 - What gaps do you see in this legislation? What's missing?
 - What support laws and regulations work (stimulatingly) in finding/keeping work?
 - What legislation is obstructive?
 - What gaps do you see in the legislation? What's missing?
 - Are there any other issues that have not been adequately addressed?
 - What legislation is obstructive?
 - What gaps do you see in the legislation? What's missing?
 - Are there any other issues that have not been adequately addressed?

Summary focus group employers

On Tuesday 25 August 2020, a focus group was held with four employers. One of them canceled in the morning. During the months of June and July many employers were called and e-mailed. Most of them did not respond or were too busy with the consequences of Corona, the implementation of the Corona measures or reorganisations due to reduced business results.

Ultimately four employers were found willing to participate. There will be a rehearsal in September with another four to five employers.

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The participants were:

- A team leader of the Dutch police, executive unit.
- A director of a supplier who also has a visual impairment.
- An HRM employee of sheltered employment facilities where a large group of people with a visual impairment work. He is also an expert by experience.
- A manager of the police, which was on the phone because of computer failure.

The questions asked were based on an in advance prepared questionnaire, which was based on the questions from JKU and divided into three categories:

1. Support and supporters in get down to work
2. Connection between education and the labor market
3. Legislation and implementation rules

Prior to this, two general questions were asked:

What are the most important topics for you when hiring people with a visual impairment?

Looking at the qualities of the candidate involved and what is achievable at the job. People often also have specific qualities (such as being able to listen well), which makes them extra welcome in specific positions.

If your organization has the objective to support employees and employers in making people with a visual impairment work, then having experience yourself is an advantage.

Ask in advance what is needed to be able to perform the work: tasks, aids, guidance, etc.

When you know well what the obstacles are, you can look for solutions. For example the SW company is very good at: tailor-made solutions for the limitations that the work yields.

What would motivate employers to hire more people with visual impairments?

If you know what the possibilities are with a visual impairment and which support and aid you can get, you as an employer would be more inclined to hire people.

If you are sure that you can get support as an employer, you could hire more people. Now employers often feeling that they are on their own.

In large organizations, commitment from management is very important. There are assignments to hire people with an occupational disability, but there is also insufficient support and misunderstanding for the difficulties at the top of an organization.

Much more information to employers and job seekers about what is possible, what kind of support is available, who can support you and which tools can offer a solution.

1. Support and supporters in getting to work.

- There are sufficiently support options and employers are very unfamiliar with them.
- Supervisors of the own organization often have insufficient expertise. You need people with specific skills for working with a visual impairment.
- Managers are often reluctant. They are unfamiliar with the possibilities and full of prejudices. Looking at things from their own point of view when they would not be able to see anymore. And imagine there are no possibilities.
- Support / guidance in the workplace is also possible for current employees. For example with new software or changes in work. UWV pays for that.
- Make it clear that an employee with a disability is more than just his or her disability. It is also a colleague with opportunities.
- The support is sufficient, but there must be better cooperation between the different parties. So more people can keep their job if they have a visual disorder.
- More attention is needed for inclusion. Integration and working together at the workplace. People with an occupational disability are regularly outside the group, they are not involved in discussions, etc.

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- “Oogvereniging” could bring parties together to strengthen mutual cooperation, commercial interests sometimes prevent this.

2. *Connection between education and the labor market;*

- There is too little attention in education for what must be compensated at the job when people are visually impaired or blind. This often leads to burnouts and dissatisfaction among employers or colleagues.
- During the school period attention must already be paid to the extra skills that are needed to be able to start working and remain working. This certainly also applies to Special Education, what needs to be developed now to be able to work in the future?
- Many professions are possible. Judges, social workers, psychologists, teachers, even a farmer with two hundred cows. Start from the qualities and see what is needed to be able to work optimally, this must be custom work. A lot is possible with the right support and tools. It is now judged too quickly that a certain job is not possible.
- Go for sustainable regular work and not for participation jobs. These jobs often disappear when the money is gone or there is a reorganization. The added value is often unclear.
- There are enormous technological developments that are still underused. This should be like regular ICT, every few years there is an update or a new version. This is how aids for employees who are visually impaired or blind should also be considered. This sounds expensive, but it is recouped by better employee performance and more people who do not drop out at work.
- Innovation must be made more negotiable. The “Oogvereniging” could play a part in making people with visual impairment aware of all these innovations. This also happens through the Ziezo Beurs.

3. *Legislation and implementing rules.*

What can be improved:

- More opportunities for self-employed persons to obtain aids. They now have to pay for it themselves, which is often not possible. You need the tools, especially if you want to start successfully.
- The facilities through the municipalities are not running smoothly. Most municipalities do not have the knowledge to advise on the aids or to approve the correct aids. Should a change in the law mean that UWV will take that up again. The group is far too small for municipalities to handle this.

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APPENDIX

Researching templates and the related survey instructions

Research Tools: Desktop Study Template

Introduction

“Desktop Study” refers to a research that accomplish sitting at a desk. It involves the procurement, processing and interpretation of existing data. This research is inexpensive and less time consuming as compared to physical research. It further provides initial information, scope, methodology and potential risks about the subjects³⁸.

Possible sources of information

This includes:

1. Scientific Literature and Studies (library/online catalogues, google scholar)
2. Search Terms ³⁹
3. Websites
 - of companies
 - interest groups
 - consulting firms
4. Press
 - Articles in magazines
 - Electronic Journals⁴⁰
5. State institutions (e.g. Federal Statistical Office, Social Security Services)
6. Encyclopaedias
7. Patents
8. Textbooks
9. Meta analyses⁴¹
 - Studies by market research institutes
 - Working paper ⁴²
 - Dissertations and diploma theses

³⁸ Secondary Research: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_research

³⁹ Search Term: <https://www.wordstream.com/search-term>

⁴⁰ Electronic Journals: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_journal

⁴¹ Meta-analysis: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meta-analysis>

⁴² Working Paper: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_paper

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- Studies by market research institutes
- Brochures
- Research papers

Procedure

Depending on the quality of the available data (e.g. data series from statistical material or texts), different methods are used, e.g.

1. Data analysis ⁴³
2. Content analysis ⁴⁴
3. Mind Maps ⁴⁵
4. Discussion, identifying gaps/positive/negative aspects, summary,
5. Compile list of hypotheses (Research questions) to be asked in telephone interviews and / or checked also in focus groups!

Structure of this activity

List of Resources

Statistics

- a) Describe the target group by demographic categories of blind and VIP (Visually Impaired people) in your country (Age, Gender, disability, highest finished formal education, in school / in job / job seeker / retired, living on their own or with parents / in institution, gets subsidy...).
- b) Write down the statistics regarding blind and VIP education in your region.
- c) Analyse the employment status statistics of blind and VIP in your area. (absolute / relative numbers, cross tabs, data from control groups – e.g. same age / education)

Stakeholders

- d) Mention the different governmental institutions working for blind and VIP in your region and their main focus (education, care, labour market integration) – if any.
- e) Write down the various Educators in your country that work for blind and VIP, and analyse if they deal with blind and VIP ONLY or if they ALSO work for our target group – if any.
- f) Are there any traditional employers for blind and VIP on the labour market?
- g) Could you analyse and describe their role and potential?
- h) What are the different End User Organisations for blind and VIP that are active in your country?
- i) What is their scope and are you aware of any context they assist our target group / our project outcomes
- j) Mention about various Labour market service providers for blind and VIP at your region – if any and analyse their experience (how long are they working, how many clients, success factors from publications).
- k) What are your views on blind and VIP in your country?
- l) Mention other stakeholders for blind, VIP and in disability general.

⁴³ Data Analysis: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_analysis

⁴⁴ Content Analysis: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_analysis

⁴⁵ Mind Maps: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map

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Studies

- m) Are there traditional job areas for blind and VIP in your region?
- n) Are there emerging job areas for blind and VIP in your country?
- o) What are the various obstacles and barriers for employment of blind and VIP?
- p) Find the impact analysis of employment for blind and VIP.
- q) Find the assistive technology usage, supply and their accessibility for blind and VIP people.
- r) Find Job Satisfaction level of blind & VIP, their co-workers and their employers.
- s) Mention other studies of blind and VIP available in your country.

Support Schemes

- t) Describe the AT provision schemes available in your country.
- u) What are the various special education courses available for blind and VIP in your country?
- v) What are the various kinds of financial support schemes available for blind and VIP?
- w) What are the support schemes available that benefit Employers for hiring blind and VIP in their organisation?
- x) Describe best practices of support schemes for employment of blind and VIP.
- y) What are different Education and Counselling support schemes available for blind and VIP in your region?
- z) Mention the various supported and shelter employment support schemes for blind and VIP available in your country.
- aa) What are the Inclusive and Accessible Job Employment Tools available in your region for the employment of blind and VIP?
- bb) What are the various work assistance services for blind and VIP available in your areas?
- cc) Mention the other support schemes available for blind and VIP.

Legislations, Policies and Administration

- dd) Mention the Policy maker working for blind and VIP.
- ee) What are the various social security laws and support available for blind and VIP in your areas?
- ff) What are various laws and policies available for blind and VIP in the education sector?
- gg) What are the different legislations, Policies and Administration for blind and VIP Employment?
- hh) What are the various legislations, Policies available for Anti –Discrimination of blind and VIP?
- ii) What are the different legislations and policies available to blind and VIP for accessibility?
- jj) What are the legislation and policies available for Assistive Technologies of blind and VIP?
- kk) What are the legislation and policies available for personal assistance of blind and VIP?
- ll) Mention other legislations, policies and administration available for blind and VIP.

Mention other resources.

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Research Tools: Focus Group Template

Introduction

The focus group represents diverse (e.g. demographics, know-how and background, experience) group of people concerned and/or related to the topic to be discussed. However, this group is small in number. Feedback is gathered from guided but still open discussions. In order to gain best output and results it is essential to use appropriate and efficient tools to record feedback from the focus group sessions, e.g. using forms, observation, and recording. Therefore, the format of a focus group session might vary considerably from open, brainstorming like discussions of structured ideation sessions towards prepared interviews. Participants are motivated to express their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards the subject addressed. Focus group members are selected by researchers to have effective and authentic responses⁴⁶.

Procedure for Focus Group

1. Collect a list of potential participants, select and collect demographic data of participants.
2. Make likely heterogeneous focus group of members with different demographic characteristics with 2 – 8 members.
3. Choose the methodology for a focus group discussion: Provoking statement: This is a method to start the focus group discussion with a provoking statement. So everyone can participate in the group.
 - a) Brainstorming: Brainstorming is a method of collective imagination by which attempts are made to find a solution to a particular problem by compiling a list of ideas spontaneously submitted by its participants⁴⁷.
 - b) Flipcharts: A flip chart is a stationery object consisting of a pad with large sheets of paper⁴⁸.
 - c) Card Methodology: Write the question behind on one side of the card then distribute these card to the team members
 - d) METAPLAN sessions: The metaplan is a facilitation method for working with groups. This enables ideas to be produced, collected, visualized, ordered, evaluated and decided in a team⁴⁹.
 - e) Provoking statement: This is a method to start the focus group discussion with a provoking statement. So everyone can participate in the group.
4. Prepare the agenda of the focus group:
 - a) Title: (For ex: What are the best practices as per you for the employment of blind people?)
 - b) Estimate how long the discussion will take and then decide the session time: Let them know whether the questionnaire will take them 8 minutes or 80 minutes. If you provide this information then there are more chances to complete the task.
 - c) Schedule smartly: Book a time that works for both of you.
5. Introduce yourself: Tell them about your credentials and about your institute.
6. Explain the purpose of the questionnaire: Some people give better answer after knowing the aim of questionnaire.
7. Reveal what will happen with the data you collect. Tell them about this project.
8. Describe any incentives (If there) that may be involved. Incentives can be monetary, desired prizes, candy, gift certificates etc.

⁴⁶ Focus Group: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Focus_group

⁴⁷ Brainstorming: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brainstorming>

⁴⁸ Flipchart: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flip_chart

⁴⁹ Metaplan Sessions: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinnwandmoderation>

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9. Data recording tools for Scribe
 - a) Minutes of meeting
 - b) Video Recording (If they agree with it.)
 - c) Flipchart
 - d) Mind Maps

Proposed guide for the RADAR focus group sessions

Questionnaire / Definition of information to be gathered

Initial Questions:

- A. Did you interact with blind and partially sighted people?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- B. Where did you interact with blind and VIP (Visually Impaired people)?
 - a) Work Environment
 - b) Education
 - c) Support Schemes
- C. How familiar are you with blind and partially sighted people?
 - a) Very less
 - b) Less
 - c) Neutral
 - d) High
 - e) very high
- D. How often do you meet with blind/VIP?
 - a) Once-in-a-year
 - b) On various occasion in a year
 - c) once-in-a-month
 - d) once-in-a-week
 - e) daily

Follow-Up Questions:

Stakeholders

- a) What are the different governmental institutions, which are working for blind and VIP in your region?
- b) What are the various educators in your country that work for blind and VIP?
- c) Who are the potential Employers for blind and VIP?
- d) What are the different end user organisations for blind and VIP that are active in your country?
- e) What are the various Labour market service providers for blind and VIP according to you?
- f) What are your views on blind and VIP?
- g) Can you mention some other stakeholders for blind and VIP?

Studies

- h) Are there traditional job areas for blind and VIP in your region?
- i) Are there emerging job areas for blind and VIP in your country?
- j) What are the various obstacles and barriers for employment of blind and VIP?
- k) What are the best practices as per you for the employment of blind and VIP?
- l) What is the impact analysis of employment of blind and VIP?
- m) What are your views on assistive technology usage, supply, and accessibility for blind and VIP?

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- n) How the job satisfaction level of blind and VIP according to you?
 - I. Low
 - II. Medium
 - III. High
- o) How the job satisfaction level of blind and VIP co-workers according to you?
 - I. Low
 - II. Medium
 - III. High
- p) Do you want to mention any studies for employment of blind and VIP?

Support Schemes

- q) What are the various AT provision support scheme for blind and VIP?
- r) What are the different special education schemes available for blind and VIP?
- s) What are the various financial support schemes available for blind and VIP?
- t) What are the support schemes available that benefit Employers for hiring blind and VIP in their organisation?
- u) What are the best practices to use support schemes?
- v) What are different Education and Counselling support schemes available for blind and VIP in your region?
- w) What are the supported and shelter employment schemes available for blind and VIP?
- x) What are the Inclusive and Accessible Job Employment Tools (like employment website) available for blind and VIP?
- y) What are the work assistance services available for blind and VIP?
- z) Is there anything else you'd like to say about support schemes for blind and VIP?

Legislations, Policies and Administration

- aa) Mention the Policy maker working for blind and VIP.
- bb) What are the various social security laws and support available for blind and VIP in your areas?
- cc) What are various laws and policies available for blind and VIP in the education sector?
- dd) What are the different legislations, Policies and Administration for blind and VIP Employment?
- ee) What are the various legislations, Policies available for Anti –Discrimination of blind and VIP?
- ff) What are the different legislations and policies available to blind and VIP for accessibility?
- gg) What are the legislation and policies available for Assistive Technologies of VIP?
- hh) What are the legislation and policies available for personal assistance of blind and VIP?
- ii) Is there anything else you'd like to say about other legislations, policies and administration available for blind and VIP?

Exit Question

- Would you like to provide us demographics of blind and VIP?
 - Yes
 - No
- Is there anything else you'd like to say about employment of blind and VIP?

Tool to collect demographic data of participants

- Which category suits you best as stakeholder for employment of blind and VIP?
 - a) Employer
 - b) Part of government institution working for blind and VIP

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- c) Policy maker for blind and VIP
- d) Educators for blind and VIP
- e) Member of blind and VIP organization
- f) Labour market service provider
- g) End User
- h) other than please mention _____
- Age: _____
- Vision
 - (a) Partially sighted
 - (b) Blind
 - (c) Other
- Education Level: _____
- Geographic Location: _____
- Email: _____

Research Tools: Questionnaire Template

Introduction

A questionnaire is a data collection technique in which a respondent provides answers to a series of questions. It takes effort and time to develop a questionnaire that will gather the data you want. Nevertheless, by taking a step-by-step approach to the development of questionnaires, you will establish an effective means to collect data that will address your particular research question⁵⁰.

Procedure for telephone interview

1. Prepare your Questions.
2. Estimate how long the questionnaire will take: Let them know whether the questionnaire will take them 8 minutes or 80 minutes. If you provide this information then there are more chances to complete questionnaires in the end.
3. Schedule smartly: Book a time that works for both of you.
4. Introduce yourself: Tell them about your credentials and about your institute⁵¹.
5. Explain the purpose of the questionnaire: Some people give better answer after knowing the aim of questionnaire.
6. Reveal what will happen with the data you collect. Tell them about this project.
7. Describe any incentives (If there) that may be involved. Incentives can be monetary, desired prizes, candy, gift certificates etc.
8. Take notes on their answers.
 - a. Minutes of meeting⁵²
 - b. Recording (If they agree with it.)
 - c. Mind Maps
9. Ask Probe Questions.
10. Ask follow up questions.

⁵⁰ How to Develop a Questionnaire for Research: <https://www.wikihow.com/Develop-a-Questionnaire-for-Research>

⁵¹ Get Some Great Phone Interview Tips: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-ace-a-phone-interview-2058579>

⁵² Minutes: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minutes>

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11. Ask Exit Question.
12. Thanks them before ending conversation.

Online Survey tools

1. Are easy to set up and distribute⁵³.
2. Can analyse / cluster data themselves and giving more productivity.
3. Can be easy to use for participants, too.
4. Are insensitive against transcript errors observed when entering pen and paper versions.
5. Can show the results in more interactive way.
6. Can be multilingual and accessible from front- and backend (e.g. "soscisurvey.de").
7. Are different in accessibility, handling, possibilities and cost plans.
8. Check their website for more information. For instance, this is the link to use "soscisurvey.de"
<https://www.soscisurvey.de/help/doku.php/en:start>

Structure of the questionnaire for RADAR

Initial Questions:

1. How would you rate your familiarity with blind and partially sighted people?
 - a) Not at all familiar
 - b) Slightly familiar
 - c) Somewhat familiar
 - d) Moderately familiar
 - e) Extremely familiar
2. How often do you meet with blind and VIP?
 - a) Never
 - b) Once-in-a-year
 - c) once-in-a-month
 - d) once-in-a-week
 - e) daily
3. Do/did you already interact with blind and partially sighted people?
 - a) No
 - b) Yes
4. If Yes: Where did you interact with blind and VIP (Visually Impaired People)?
 - a) At workplace / in a professional environment
 - I. How would you estimate the job satisfaction level of blind and VIP?
 - a. Low
 - b. Medium
 - c. High
 - II. How would you estimate the job satisfaction level of blind and VIP co-workers?
 - a. Low
 - b. Medium
 - c. High
 - b) In education
 - c) In a support and counselling environment
 - d) During leisure time

⁵³ Using Online Surveys to Find Out What People Really Think :
<https://www.upwork.com/hiring/marketing/using-online-surveys-to-find-out-what-people-really-think/>

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Follow-Up Questions:

Statistics

Can you point us to statistical data, studies and resources (Title / name, short description and eventually URL) concerning...

- a. demographical data, e.g. Distribution of Age, Gender, disability form and grade, highest finished formal education, job status or retirement, housing status – e.g. living on their own or with parents or in institution and financial status like being self employed over employed to subsidy...
- b. People in diverse education schemes at all levels for blind and VIP (special education vs. inclusive education during primary, secondary, vocational and/or higher education)
- c. employment status statistics of blind and VIP at local/regional/national level?
- d. impact analyses / studies and data concerning the employment of blind and VIP?
- e. concerning “traditional” employers and traditional job profiles for blind and VIP in your country?
- f. concerning new, emerging employers and job profiles for blind and VIP in your country
- g. concerning Assistive Technology – e.g. usage, provision, funding and accessibility in general for blind and VIP in your country?
- h. other important related information / studies / resources for blind and VIP in your country?

Stakeholders

Can you point us to (Name, very short description – eventually URL):

- a. governmental institutions working for blind and VIP in your country?
- b. educators education agencies working for blind and VIP in your country?
- c. end user organisations active for blind and VIP in your country?
- d. labour market service providers for blind and VIP in your country?
- e. other important stakeholders for blind and VIP in your country?

Employment of blind / VIP

Can you point us to (Name, very short description – eventually URL):

- a. obstacles and barriers for the employment of blind and VIP in your country?
- b. best practices for the employment of blind and VIP in your country?

Support Schemes

Can you point us to (Name, very short description – eventually URL):

- a. counselling and education support schemes available for blind and VIP?
- b. support with Personal assistance schemes
- c. special education schemes for blind and VIP?
- d. inclusive education support schemes for blind and VIP?
- e. supported and/or sheltered employment schemes available for blind and VIP?
- f. formation and (Re-)Qualification schemes to prepare blind and VIP for the 1st labour market
- g. labour market inclusion support schemes
- h. specific / inclusive job market tools (e.g. websites connecting companies and blind / VIP job seekers)?
- i. work assistance services available for blind and VIP?
- j. AT provision support schemes for blind and VIP?
- k. social security / financial support schemes available for blind and VIP?
- l. support schemes and benefits / financial support for companies employing blind and VIP?

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m. other related support schemes for blind and VIP in your country?

Legislations, Policies and Administration

1. Who are the responsible policy maker(s) concerning blind and VIP in your country?
2. Can you point us to the relevant legislation, policies and guidelines for blind and VIP in your country on... (Name, very short description – eventually URL)
 - a. social security services and measures
 - b. provision and funding of Assistive Technologies
 - c. personal assistance (in school / continuing education, at work and during leisure time)
 - d. education (inclusive / special, at all levels)
 - e. employment (self employed, 1st, 2nd labour market, supported / sheltered)
 - f. anti / non – discrimination
 - g. accessibility
 - h. other relevant areas for blind and VIP in your country

Exit Question

Research Tool: Consultation (Online Questionnaire) Template

The Project Radar

The project Radar aims to tackle the difficult issues related to unemployment rates of blind and VIP in EU, contributing to fill the lack of information about new opportunities provided by the Labor Market for them and improving the knowledge on current training chances linked to accessibility systems in use and new employment areas.

Our Work and Your Role

In a first step, we research the state of the art and what is needed (from most diverse viewpoints, e.g. from end users to educators, from developers to policy makers and service providers).

This Consultation

This consultation consists of 4 parts and was set up to get a first overview on available education, policies, rules, laws and best practice for blind and partially sighted people on their way to new job opportunities at the 1st labour market, in the different partner countries and amongst diverse stakeholders.

We thank you for completing this consultation and for sharing your experiences and knowledge with us! Based on information collected through this consultation, we also plan to organize consultation (focus) groups.

Your participation in both completing the tool and in the consultation groups is completely voluntary. The information from the tool and the consultation groups will give us a comprehensive view on opinions, aspects, gaps, barriers and suggestions on critical issues related to education and labour market integration of blind and partially sighted people.

Thank you again very much for your valuable and appreciated help!

Part A – Experience with blind and partially sighted people

This first part of the consultation is to collect information on your personal view and experience with blind and partially sighted people.

Important: There is no right or wrong - we collect answers and opinions and appreciate your co-operation and help!

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1. For which partner do you fill in the consultation?

Choose appropriate!

- Centro Machiavelli
- Polski Związek Niewidomych
- Stichting Bartiméus Sonneheerdt
- JKU Linz
- I.Ri.Fo.R

2. Where are you based?

Choose appropriate!

In case your country is not in the list, please enter it in option "Others".

- Austria
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Other - Enter COUNTRY here _____

3. How often do / did you meet blind and partially sighted people?

Check the appropriate!

- Never
- Once a year
- Once a month
- Once a week
- Daily

4. How would you rate your familiarity with blind and partially sighted people?

Check the appropriate level!

- Not at all familiar
- Slightly familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Moderately familiar
- Extremely familiar

5. Do / did you already interact with blind and/or partially sighted people?

Check appropriate!

- yes
- no

Part B: Opinion and Views

This second part of the consultation deals with your views and experiences as / on blind and partially sighted person(s).

Most important: There is no right or wrong answer, we collect opinions and appreciate your co-operation and help!

6. Do / Did you interact with blind and partially sighted people at workplace?

Check the appropriate!

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- yes
 - no
7. How would you rate the job satisfaction level of a) blind and partially sighted people in general and b) blind and partially sighted co-workers in your surrounding?
Rate by checking the appropriate level. In case you are not sure, tick “not sure”
- On a scale from 1 (=low) to 5 (=high), I would rate the job satisfaction level of...
 - Blind and partially sighted people in general as...
 - blind and partially sighted co-workers as...
 - 1= Low
 - 5 = High
 - -1 = Not Sure
8. Where else do / did you interact with blind and partially sighted people?
Check the appropriate!
- In a support and counseling environment
 - In education
 - During leisure time
 - Other: Please give us more info
 - Not sure

Part C: Statistical data and other resources

In this third part of our consultation – we collect most important information on materials and info concerning blind and partially sighted people in a diverse collection of contexts - we need resources and links, info and data (best also available in English) concerning the situation in your country.

Most important: There is no right or wrong answer, we collect opinions and really appreciate your co-operation and help!

9. Can you point us to (primarily national) statistical data, studies and resources concerning demographical data on blind and partially sighted people?
Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!
- Financial situation in general (e.g. compared to non-disabled people)
 - Housing status – e.g. living on their own or with parents or in an institution
 - Job status from job seeker over (self) employed to retired / living on subsidy
 - Highest finished formal education
 - Age, gender, disability form and grade
10. Can you point us to...
People and institutions / support schemes working in different levels and settings of education for blind and partially sighted people?
Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!
Please give us info on
- Related relevant support schemes
 - Inclusive education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education
 - Special education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education
 - Not Sure
11. Can you point us to employment status statistics of blind and partially sighted people at different levels?

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Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- International Level
- National Level
- Regional Level
- Local Level

12. Can you point us to resources concerning labour market and employment measures / support schemes for blind and partially sighted people?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- Relevant relate support schemes
- Impact analyses on placement and employment measures
- measures to open new / non-traditional job areas / novel job opportunities
- support schemes available for blind and partially sighted people on the labour market
- studies and data concerning placements and employment measures no already listed above

13. Can you point us to “traditional” employers, traditional job profiles and connected support schemes for blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- Traditional, relevant related support schemes
- Traditional job profiles
- Traditional employers

14. Can you point us to new job opportunities and relevant related support schemes directed to blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- Related, relevant support schemes
- New, emerging job profiles
- New, emerging job areas
- New, emerging employers

15. Can you point us to data and resources concerning Assistive Technology (AT) and ICT (information and communication technologies) and relevant support schemes for blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- relevant related support schemes
- accessibility measures in general
- AT and ICT training in place
- AT types and tools in use
- Provision
- Funding

16. Can you point us to (resources and info on) obstacles and barriers for the employment of blind and partially sighted people in your country?

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- Enter all appropriate, separated by ; (semicolon)
- We need title/name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources
17. Can you point us to other important related information / studies / resources / support schemes on / for blind and partially sighted people in your country?
Enter all appropriate, separated by ; (semicolon)
- We need title/name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources
18. Can you point us to the following stakeholders working for / with blind and partially sighted people in your country?
Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the stakeholder – if not done so already before!
- Governmental institutions
 - Educators / education agencies
 - end user organisations active especially for blind and partially sighted people
 - labour market service providers
 - most important policy maker(s)
 - other important stakeholders
 -
19. Can you point us to the following stakeholders working for / with blind and partially sighted people in your country?
Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the stakeholder – if not done so already before!
- Support with personal and work assistance schemes
 - Information and (Re-)Qualification schemes to prepare blind and partially sighted people for the 1st labour market
 - Support schemes and benefits / financial support for COMPANIES employing (also) blind and partially sighted people?
 - Specific / inclusive novel job market tools (e.g. websites connecting companies and blind / partially sighted job seekers)?
 - Other related support schemes for blind and partially sighted people in your country?
20. Can you point us to the relevant legislation, policies and guidelines for blind and partially sighted people in your country on...
Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the stakeholder – if not done so already before!
- Social security service and measures
 - Provision and funding of Assistive technologies
 - Personal assistance (in school / continuing education, at work and during leisure time)
 - Education (inclusive / special, at all levels)
 - employment (self-employed, 1st, 2nd labour market, supported / sheltered)
 - anti/non – discrimination
 - accessibility
 - other relevant areas for blind and partially sighted people in your country
21. Is there anything else – apart from the questions already answered – you want to let us know concerning education and employment of blind and partially sighted people in your country?

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- _____

Demographic Details_Text

This last part is to ask for some basic demography.

Please note:

As with the whole questionnaire, all answers, remarks and data are stored anonymised and on a secure server, only used for research within the project RADAR and deleted upon completion of the work in this project.

22. What is your year of birth?

Year of birth: _____

23. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Diverse
- I don't want to answer

24. How would you rate your level of sight / vision?

Tick appropriate level!

- Legally Blind
- Borderline between blind and partially sighted
- Partially sighted
- Sighted
- Other

25. What is your (highest) education level?

Select the highest level of qualification you have obtained.

- Finished school with no qualifications
- Still in school
- Secondary school-leaving certificate
- High school diploma / secondary school-leaving certificate or equivalent
- Completed apprenticeship
- Vocational baccalaureate diploma, vocational secondary certification
- Higher education entrance qualification
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Other degree – please mention _____

26. Which stakeholder group would you identify yourself with?

Tick all appropriate!

- End-users
- Employer / a company hiring people (amongst them: blind and partially sighted people)
- Policy make / governmental institution
- Public / private educator working with blind and partially sighted learners

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- Lobbying / Self representation group / association (of blind and partially sighted people)
- Non/governmental labour market service provider
- Other... _____

Thank you for completing this consultation!

We would like to thank you very much for your help. We thank you for completing this consultation and for sharing your experiences and knowledge with us!

Based on information collected through this consultation, we also plan to organise consultation groups.

The information you provided and the data gained from consultation groups will give us a comprehensive view on opinions, aspects, gaps, barriers and suggestions on the issues related to education and labour market inclusion of blind and partially sighted people.

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Consultation (Online Questionnaire) from Austria and Poland Answers

Within work package 1, TEAF, it was JKU Austria task to collect KEY-WITNESS (Resp./Head of local or national organizations/associations for blind and VIP) opinions.

Not only because of the Corona crisis and the connected measures that kept us from travelling and personal meetings face – to – face, but also in terms of better reachout and efficiency, we implemented this consultation with the professional online tool SoSci Survey - <https://www.soscisurvey.de/en/index> that is easily adapted to individual needs, fully accessible in Front- and Backend, fully implements GDPR (up to storage of eMail addresses and is additionally free for research use).

The full consultation tool comprised 5 different languages (English, Italian, Polish, Dutch and German) and consisted of 26 questions.

But we have received answers from as mentioned in the table below:

		Language			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	eng	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
	ger	5	18,5	18,5	96,3
	pol	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 1: Received answers in English, German and Polish as represent in the table

Part A – Experience with blind and partially sighted people

1. For which partner do you fill in the consultation?

Choose appropriate!

- Centro Machiavelli
- Polski Związek Niewidomych
- Stichting Bartiméus Sonneheerdt
- JKU Linz
- I.Ri.Fo.R

		Partner			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Polski Związek Niewidomych	16	59,3	59,3	59,3
	JKU Linz	11	40,7	40,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 2: Received answers only from PZN, Poland and JKU, Linz side.

2. Where are you based?

Choose appropriate!

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In case your country is not in the list, please enter it in option “Others”.

- Austria
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Other - Enter COUNTRY here _____

Country

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Austria	8	29,6	29,6	29,6
	Italy	1	3,7	3,7	33,3
	Other - Enter COUNTRY here!	2	7,4	7,4	40,7
	Poland	16	59,3	59,3	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 3: Participants from Austria, Poland and Italy

Country: Other - Enter COUNTRY here!

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		25	92,6	92,6	92,6
	Slovakia	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	Spain	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 4: Participants from other countries

3. How often do / did you meet blind and partially sighted people?

Check the appropriate!

- Never
- Once a year
- Once a month
- Once a week
- Daily

Meeting_frequency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once a year	8	29,6	30,8	30,8
	Once a month	3	11,1	11,5	42,3
	Once a week	5	18,5	19,2	61,5
	Daily	10	37,0	38,5	100,0
	Total	26	96,3	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	1	3,7		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 5: Meeting frequency with Blind and VIP

4. How would you rate your familiarity with blind and partially sighted people?

Check the appropriate level!

- Not at all familiar
- Slightly familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Moderately familiar
- Extremely familiar

Familiarity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all familiar	1	3,7	3,8	3,8
	Slightly familiar	1	3,7	3,8	7,7
	Somewhat familiar	3	11,1	11,5	19,2
	Moderately familiar	9	33,3	34,6	53,8
	Extremely familiar	12	44,4	46,2	100,0
	Total	26	96,3	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	1	3,7		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 6: familiarity with blind and partially sighted people

5. Do / did you already interact with blind and/or partially sighted people?

Check appropriate!

- yes
- no

Part B: Opinion and Views

This second part of the consultation deals with your views and experiences as / on blind and partially sighted person(s).

Most important: There is no right or wrong answer, we collect opinions and appreciate your co-operation and help!

6. Do / Did you interact with blind and partially sighted people at workplace?

Check the appropriate!

- yes
- no

Workplace interaction w BVIP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	74,1	74,1	74,1
	No	7	25,9	25,9	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 7: Workplace interaction with BVIP

7. How would you rate the job satisfaction level of a) blind and partially sighted people in general and b) blind and partially sighted co-workers in your surrounding?

Rate by checking the appropriate level. In case you are not sure, tick “not sure”

On a scale from 1 (=low) to 5 (=high), I would rate the job satisfaction level of...

- Blind and partially sighted people in general as...
- blind and partially sighted co-workers as...
 - 1= Low
 - 5 = High
 - -1 = Not Sure

BVIP at workplace: blind and partially sighted people in general as...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	1	3,7	8,3	8,3
	2	1	3,7	8,3	16,7
	3	2	7,4	16,7	33,3
	4	5	18,5	41,7	75,0
	High	3	11,1	25,0	100,0
	Total	12	44,4	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	3	11,1		
	not sure	6	22,2		
	System	6	22,2		
	Total	15	55,6		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 8: BVIP at workplace: blind and partially sighted people in general as...

BVIP at workplace: blind and partially sighted co-workers as...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	10	37,0	62,5	62,5
	High	6	22,2	37,5	100,0
	Total	16	59,3	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	3	11,1		
	not sure	2	7,4		
	System	6	22,2		
	Total	11	40,7		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 9: BVIP at workplace: blind and partially sighted co-workers as...

8. Where else do / did you interact with blind and partially sighted people?

Check the appropriate!

- In a support and counseling environment
- In education
- During leisure time
- Other: Please give us more info
- Not sure

Where interaction w BVIP: In a support and counseling environment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	17	63,0	63,0	63,0
	Checked	10	37,0	37,0	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 10: Interaction with BVIP in a support and counselling environment

Where interaction w BVIP: In education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	13	48,1	48,1	48,1
	Checked	14	51,9	51,9	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 11: Interaction with BVIP in education

Where interaction w BVIP: During leisure time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	12	44,4	44,4	44,4
	Checked	15	55,6	55,6	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 12: Interaction with BVIP during leisure time

Where interaction w BVIP: Residual option (negative) or number of selected options

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	7,4	7,4	7,4
	1	11	40,7	40,7	48,1
	2	9	33,3	33,3	81,5
	3	5	18,5	18,5	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 13: Where interaction w BVIP: Residual option (negative) or number of selected options

Where interaction w BVIP: Other... (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		22	81,5	81,5	81,5
	Camp	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
	I have blind parents	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
	In EU projects	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
	international meetings and conferences	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	Once I volunteered to work for 1 them.	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 14: Where interaction w BVIP: Other... (free text)

Part C: Statistical data and other resources

In this third part of our consultation – we collect most important information on materials and info concerning blind and partially sighted people in a diverse collection of contexts - we need resources and links, info and data (best also available in English) concerning the situation in your country.

Most important: There is no right or wrong answer, we collect opinions and really appreciate your co-operation and help!

9. Can you point us to (primarily national) statistical data, studies and resources concerning demographical data on blind and partially sighted people?

Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- **Financial situation in general (e.g. compared to non-disabled people)**

Data_Resources1: Financial situation in general (e.g. compared to non-disabled people)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	20	74,1	74,1	74,1
	Checked	7	25,9	25,9	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 15: Data_Resources1: Financial situation in general (e.g. compared to non-disabled people)

Data_Resources1: Financial situation in general (e.g. compared to non-disabled people) (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	As above	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
	https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_menschen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
	https://www.pfron.org.pl/fileadmin/Badania_i_analzy/Badanie_potrzeb_ON/Raport_koncowy_badanie_potrzeb_ON.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
	No financial problems.	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
	Social Insurance Institution (https://www.zus.pl/english)	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	the situation is difficult	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 16: Financial situation in general (e.g. compared to non-disabled people)

- **Housing status – e.g. living on their own or with parents or in an institution**

Data_Resources1: Housing status “ e.g. living on their own or with parents or in an institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	20	74,1	74,1	74,1
	Checked	7	25,9	25,9	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 17: Housing status “ e.g. living on their own or with parents or in an institution

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Data_Resources1: Housing status e.g. living on their own or with parents or in an institution (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
As above	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
Foundations for the Blind; Associations for the Blind	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
http://www.sinnesbehindert.at/downloads/	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_menschen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
I live with my wife.	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
www.pfron.org.pl/fileadmin/Badania_i_analizy/Badanie_potrzeb_ON/Raport_koncowy_badanie_potrzeb_ON.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 18: Data_Resources1: Housing status e.g. living on their own or with parents or in an institution (free text)

- **Job status from job seeker over (self) employed to retired / living on subsidy**

Data_Resources1: Job status from job seeker over (self) employed to retired / living on subsidy

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not checked	16	59,3	59,3	59,3
Checked	11	40,7	40,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 19: Data_Resources1: Job status from job seeker over (self) employed to retired / living on subsidy

Data_Resources 1: Job status from job seeker over (self) employed to retired / living on subsidy (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17	63,0	63,0	63,0
Administrative Data at Ministries	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
As above	1	3,7	3,7	70,4

Currently voluntary worker only	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
http://www.sinnesbehindert.at/downloads/	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_mensen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf ; Not really, SILC gives data on education and social status (that might be lowered through a disability)	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
INE	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736055502&idp=1254735976595&menu=ultiDatos				
Labor Office; Foundations for the Blind, Associations for the Blind; Central Office of Statistics (stat.gov.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Persons with disabilities registered in the Job Office in the Municipality of Warsaw, data as per 2019, pages 73-85; https://warszawa.praca.gov.pl/documents/8188477/8203596/%281%29Raport%20Urzu%20Pracy%20m.st.%20Warszawy%20za%20rok%202019.pdf/03e25748-4ce9-40d1-9d06-7912c2cbbca1?t=1582722339796 ; Information as per previous years concerning persons with disabilities registered in the Job Office of the Municipality of Warsaw; https://warszawa.praca.gov.pl/raporty-urzedu ; Data concerning persons with disabilities on the labour market ; http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,80,rynek-pracy	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Records of employed disabled persons maintained by State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,121,informacje-o-realizacji-karty-praw-osob-niepelnosprawnych	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 20: Data_Resources1: Job status from job seeker over (self) employed to retired / living on subsidy (free text)

- **Highest finished formal education**

Data_Resources1: Highest finished formal education,

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	19	70,4	70,4	70,4
	Checked	8	29,6	29,6	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 21: Highest finished formal education

Data_Resources1: Highest finished formal education, (free text)

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
As above	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
Education of persons with disabilities; http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,123,edukacja	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,121,informacje-o-realizacji-karty-praw-osob-niepelnosprawnych	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_mensen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf ; Not really, SILC gives data on education and social status (that might be lowered through a disability)	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Postgraduate	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
there will be no reliable data as this is not covered in university statistics	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 22: Data_Resources1: Highest finished formal education, (free text)

- **Age, gender, disability form and grade**

Data_Resources1: Age, gender, disability form and grade

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	14	51,9	51,9	51,9
Not checked	13	48,1	48,1	100,0
Checked	27	100,0	100,0	
Total				

Table 23: Data_Resources1: Age, gender, disability form and grade

Data_Resources1: Age, gender, disability form and grade (free text)

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	14	51,9	51,9	51,9
55, male	1	3,7	3,7	55,6
Central Office of Statistics (stat.gov.pl); The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People (niepelnosprawni.gov.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	59,3
Data from The Central Statistical Office; Data on the pages of the Government Plenipotentiary's Office for Disabled People; Data from Polish Association of the Blind;	1	3,7	3,7	63,0

Electronic National System for Monitoring Disability Decisions supervised by the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People;	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
Electronic National System for Monitoring Disability Decisions supervised by the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People.	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
ELGA Data, Data in Official Statistics, Pflegegeld, Begünstigte Behinderte, ... other administrative data	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
http://statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/gesundheit/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche_beeintrachtigungen/index.html	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_menschen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf ; http://statistik.at/web_en/statistics/PeopleSociety/social_statistics/social_protection_according_to_eu_concept/social_expenditure/index.html	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
https://www.gov.pl/ , Health Status of Population in Poland in 2014	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
https://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,164,orzekanie-o-niepelnosprawnosci-i-stopniu-niepelnosprawnosci-statystyki	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
INE - https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736055502&idp=1254735573175	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Information from the National Census of 2011 carried out by The Central Office of Statistics http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/index.php?c=page&id=78 ; Register of disability certificates http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,164,orzekanie-o-niepelnosprawnosci-i-stopniu-niepelnosprawnosci-statystyki ; Detailed information from different areas and institutions for persons with disabilities http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,122,zrodla-danych-osobach-niepelnosprawnych ; The Report on Persons with Disabilities Published by the Municipality of Warsaw https://politykaspoleczna.um.warszawa.pl/niepelnosprawnosci-raport-dot-skali-i-struktury-zjawiska-niepelnosprawno-ci	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Maybe some data can be found on the websites of Central Office of Statistics and National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 24: Data_Resources1: Age, gender, disability form and grade (free text)

10. Can you point us to...

People and institutions / support schemes working in different levels and settings of education for blind and partially sighted people?

Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

Please give us info on

- **Related relevant support schemes**

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Data_Resources2: Related relevant support schemes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	15	55,6	55,6	55,6
	Checked	12	44,4	44,4	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 25: Related relevant support schemes

Data_Resources2: Related relevant support schemes (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15	55,6	55,6	55,6
Active self-government programme (https://www.pfron.org.pl/en/the-fund/programy-i-zadania-pfron/programy-i-zadania-real/active-self-government-programme/); Elimination of communication barriers programme (https://www.pfron.org.pl/osoby-niepelnospawne/sprawna-komunikacja/likwidacja-barier-w-komunikowaniu/)	1	3,7	3,7	59,3
Dedicated teacher for blind students in a public school	1	3,7	3,7	63,0
Hilfsgemeinschaft, Blindenverband, Uniability, Beable, Behindertenombudsleute an den Unis	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
https://tecza.org/ "Rainbow" Association, early support for child development;	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
https://www.bbrz.at/ ;	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
https://www.inclusion24.com/	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
IhrZubehör (Techn. Hilfsmitteln); vedici, Hilfsgemeinschaft; etc.	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
Integriert Studieren (JKU)	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
programs from State Fund for the Rehabilitation for Disabled People for students; supplying specialized equipment to students - State Fund for the Rehabilitation for Disabled People under implemented programs to support people with vision problems;	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Self help groups for students / kids and parents https://www.netdoktor.at/selbsthilfegruppen/sehbehinderung-240550 gives a sound overview	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
to the point above on inclusive education: Public schools; psychological and pedagogical counseling centers; Related other support systems: Government Plenipotentiary's Office for Disabled People at Colleges; help in school and educational centers and psychological and pedagogical counseling centers; programs co-financed from The State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Warsaw Family Aid Center; https://wcpr.pl/	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 26: Relevant support schemes (free text)

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- **Inclusive education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education**

Data_Resources2: Inclusive education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	19	70,4	70,4	70,4
	Checked	8	29,6	29,6	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 27: Inclusive education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education

- Special education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education

Data_Resources2: Special education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	13	48,1	48,1	48,1
	Checked	14	51,9	51,9	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 28 : Special education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education

Data_Resources2: Special education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		13	48,1	48,1	48,1
	"	1	3,7	3,7	51,9
	BBI Vienna, LSZSH Linz, RISS Linz (section of BFI / BBRZ), Institute(s) Integriert Studieren, https://www.ausbildungskompass.at/ausbildungen/104779-fachschule-sehbehinderte-und-blinde-informationstechnik/	1	3,7	3,7	55,6
	BBI, Zinckgasse, Odilien-Institut - these are basically inclusive institutions but the line for entering is not available	1	3,7	3,7	59,3
	BBI; LZSH Linz;	1	3,7	3,7	63,0
	Colegio Tres Olivos; Madrid; Fundacion Tecnología Social (non-formal education)	1	3,7	3,7	66,7

Education Office of the Municipality of Warsaw; http://www.edukacja.warszawa.pl/ ; Special schools and Institutions supervised by the Education Office of the Municipality of Warsaw http://www.edukacja.warszawa.pl/sites/edukacja/files/strona/4343/attachments/informator_o_szkolach_specjalnych_2019-2020.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/oswiata-i-wychowanie-w-roku-szkolnym-20172018,1,13.html	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
Lower Silesian Special School and Education Center No.13 for Blind and Visually Impaired Students and with other disabilities named after Maria Grzegorzewska in Wrocław https://www.oswdn.pl/ ; Institute for The Blind Children named after Róża Czapka in Laski near Warsaw https://www.laski.edu.pl/pl/edukacja ; Kuyavian-Pomeranian Special Glass and Educational Center No. 1 for Children and Youth with Visually Impaired and Blind named after Louis Braille in Bydgoszcz http://www.braille.bydgoszcz.pl/ ; School and Facility Complex "Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired" in Krakow http://blind.krakow.pl/index.html ;	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
Ministry of National Education; Central Office of Statistics; University Centres for assisting Disabled Persons	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
Rector's representatives for disabled students - higher education; special schools - program and teachers prepared to work with disabled children;	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
School and educational centers; universities; integration schools; public schools;	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Special school and education centres for the blind, e.g. www.laski.edu.pl	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
special schools for blind	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Special Schools for the Blind that are pedagogically trained and appropriate to deal with blind people	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 29: Special education at primary, secondary level, in vocational and/or higher education (free text)

- Not Sure

11. Can you point us to employment status statistics of blind and partially sighted people at different levels?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- **International Level**

Data_Resources3: International Level

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Not checked	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
	Checked	4	14,8	14,8	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 30: BVIP employment statistics international level

International Level (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/HLTH_DLM010 (only available resource, 2014)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
https://www.hfh.ch/fileadmin/files/documents/Dokumente_FE/1_C.4_Spring_SZB_Taubblindheit_Tatsachen_deutsch.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
on all levels, there is only administrative data available on Feststellungsbescheide, GdB, ... The big problem: All people (and there are many of them), who are disabled but not in an official way (Feststellungsbescheid, Beg. Behinderte) remain unknown	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 31: BVIP employment statistics international level (free text)

- **National Level**

Data_Resources3: National Level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16	59,3	59,3	59,3
	11	40,7	40,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0

Table 32: BVIP employment statistics national level

Data_Resources3: National Level (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17	63,0	63,0	63,0
http://www.sinnesbehindert.at/downloads/	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
https://news.wko.at/news/oesterreich/position_behinderung.html (scarce, 2016);	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_mensen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf (Page 24)				
https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/krajowe-plan-y-dzialan-na-rzecz-zatrudnienia-kpdz	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736055502&idp=1254735976595&menu=ultiDatos	1	3,7	3,7	77,8

Information on employment of persons with disabilities; https://psz.praca.gov.pl/wyniki-wyszukiwania//szukaj/?keywords=niepe%C5%82nosprawni	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
on all levels, there is only administrative data available on Feststellungsbescheide, GdB, ... The big problem: All people (and there are many of them), who are disabled but not in an official way (Feststellungsbescheid, Beg. Behinderte) remain unknown	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Pro-employment projects, including implemented by non-governmental organizations from funds from The State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People, e.g. the Graduate project implemented by Polish Association of the Blind;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Unione Italiana dei Ciechi e degli Ipovedenti www.uiciechi.it	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 33: BVIP employment statistics national level (free text)

- **Regional Level**

Data_Resources3: Regional Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	22	81,5	81,5	81,5
	Checked	5	18,5	18,5	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 34: BVIP employment statistics regional level

Data_Resources3: Regional Level (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	as above, projects	22	81,5	81,5	81,5
	http://www.sinnesbehindert.at/downloads/	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
	information on employment of persons with disabilities from West-Pomeranian region; https://www.wup.pl/images/uploads/II_DLA_INSTYTUCJI/badania/gospodarka/Osoby_niepe%C5%82nosprawne_na_zachodniopomorskim_rynku_pracy_-_Raport_ko%C5%84cowy_v2.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
	No idea	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
	on all levels, there is only administrative data available on Feststellungsbescheide, GdB, ... The big problem: All people (and there are many of them), who are disabled but not in an official way (Feststellungsbescheid, Beg. Behinderte) remain unknown	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
		1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 35: BVIP employment statistics regional level (free text)

- **Local Level**

Data_Resources3: Local Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
	Checked	6	22,2	22,2	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 36: Local Level employment status

Data_Resources3: Local Level (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	22	81,5	81,5	81,5
Co-financing projects from European Funds implemented by foundations and associations;	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Local job offices	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
on all levels, there is only administrative data available on Feststellungsbescheide, GdB, ... The big problem: All people (and there are many of them), who are disabled but not in an official way (Feststellungsbescheid, Beg. Behinderte) remain unknown	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Persons with disabilities registered in the Municipality's of Warsaw Job Office, data as per year 2019, pages 73-85; https://warszawa.praca.gov.pl/documents/8188477/8203596/%2081%20Raport%20Urzu%20Pracy%20m.st.%20Warszawy%20za%20rok%202019.pdf/03e25748-4ce9-40d1-9d06-7912c2cbbca1?t=1582722339796	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 37 : Local Level employment statistics (free text)

12. Can you point us to resources concerning labour market and employment measures / support schemes for blind and partially sighted people?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- **Relevant relate support schemes**

Data_Resources4: relevant related support schemes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	22	81,5	81,5	81,5
	Checked	5	18,5	18,5	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 38: relevant related support schemes

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Data_Resources4: relevant related support schemes (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	22	81,5	81,5	81,5
Blind Unions, Hilfsgemeinschaft, Self Help Groups	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Guidelines for employers of blind employees e.g. https://www.pfron.org.pl/fileadmin/ftp/Dobre_praktyki/UE/Wsparcie_osob_niewidomych_na_rynku_pracy_II.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (www.pfron.org.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Talent-Programme "myAbility" - www.myability.org	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
The "Active-Self government" program for co-financing computer hardware, software and orthopedic aids for the disabled people; programs co-financed by The State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People to overcome communication barriers;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 39: relevant related support schemes (free text)

- **Impact analyses on placement and employment measures**

Data_Resources4: impact analyses on placement and employment measures

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	26	96,3	96,3	96,3
Not checked	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Checked	27	100,0	100,0	
Total				

Table 40: Data_Resources4: impact analyses on placement and employment measures

Data_Resources4: impact analyses on placement and employment measures (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	26	96,3	96,3	96,3
The report of Supreme Audit Office on effective distribution of financial resources for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities of National Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons between 2011-2013; https://www.nik.gov.pl/pliki/id,8486,vp,10580.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 41: impact analyses on placement and employment measures (free text)

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- **measures to open new / non-traditional job areas / novel job opportunities**

Data_Resources4: measures to open new / non traditional job areas / novel job opportunities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
	Checked	4	14,8	14,8	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 42: measures to open new / non traditional job areas / novel job opportunities

Data_Resources4: measures to open new / non traditional job areas / novel job opportunities (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		24	88,9	88,9	88,9
	At least info on this: https://www.orcam.com/de/blog/ausbildung-fuer-blinde-und-sehbehinderte-menschen/	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
	Federal working group deafblind people - http://bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft-taubblinden.de/?page_id=8	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	https://www.myability.org/	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 43: measures to open new / non traditional job areas / novel job opportunities (free text)

- **support schemes available for blind and partially sighted people on the labour market**

Data_Resources4: support schemes available for blind and partially sighted people on the labour market

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
	Checked	9	33,3	33,3	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 44: support schemes available for blind and partially sighted people on the labour market

Data_Resources4: support schemes available for blind and partially sighted people on the labour market (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
Altix company (www.altix.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	70,4

based on Act of 27 August 1997 on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons: payroll subsidies of disabled employees, the possibility of co-financing adaptation of the workplace, the possibility of partial financing of the disabled employee's assistant; Act of 20 April 2004 on employment promotion and labor market institutions: support for jobseekers: training, support for opening a business; programs from public funds, including European ones for vocational activation: internships, trainings, vocational courses, internship scholarships; State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People programs: internships, trainings, vocational courses, apprenticeships, internships scholarships;	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
Co-financing service system (co-financing for remuneration for disabled people from funds from The State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People;	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_menschen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf (Page 24ff)	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
Law: The Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities ; http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19971230776 of 27 August, 1997, particularly article 26, 26A, 26D, 26E, 26G.	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (www.pfron.org.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Network vocational assistance www.neba.at	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
support programs for persons with disabilities on the labour market; financial support from state for salaries paid for employees with disabilities; financial support to purchase necessary equipment suitable for a person with disability; financial assistance for persons with disabilities to start their own economic activity; refund of social insurance fees	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
www.pfron.org.pl	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	0

Table 45: support schemes available for blind and partially sighted people on the labour market (free text)

- **studies and data concerning placements and employment measures not already listed above**

Data_Resources4: studies and data concerning placements and employment measures not already listed above

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
	Checked	4	14,8	14,8	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 46: support schemes available for blind and partially sighted people on the labour market (free text)

Data_Resources4: studies and data concerning placements and employment measures not already listed above (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
Act on vocational, social rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities of August 27, 1997; Act of 20th April, 2004 on promotion of employment and institutions of the labour market; "The national programme of social economy until the year 2023, economy of social solidarity; The act of 27 April, 2006 on social cooperatives;	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Austrian federal labour market services (AMS) should have these info;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
https://bmsk2.cms.apa.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/5/CH3434/CMS1450699435356/statistik_-_mensen_mit_behinderung_20131.pdf (page 24ff)	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Publications concerning blind persons and their possibilities: BÅ,aziak M., KaÅ,kus A. (2002). Conditions of Optimised Functioning of Visually Impaired Students in Integrated Teaching, the bulletin "SzkoÅ,a Specjalna", no 5, pp 290-295.; also: http://www.adaptacje.uw.edu.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=36&Itemid=21 ; CzerwiÅ,,ska, K. (2007). "Needs and possibilities of Partially Sighted" in: D. Gorajewska (red.), "We get to know persons with disabilities. (pages.43-50). Warsaw: Integration Association.; Duffy, M., Maj. W. (2000) Evaluation and adaptation of a workplace for Blind and Low vision persons. in: Guidebook for employers of the blind and low vision persons. AWARE Europe Foundation, Warsaw http://www.idn.org.pl/aware-europe) ; Nowacka-Pyrlik, R. (2008) Basic rehabilitation of blind and low vision adults, particularly elderly people " based on experience and projects carried out in the Central Rehabilitation Clinic of the Polish Association of the Blind in Warsaw. Contacto	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 47: studies and data concerning placements and employment measures not already listed above (free text)

13. Can you point us to "traditional" employers, traditional job profiles and connected support schemes for blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- **Traditional, relevant related support schemes**

Data_Resources5: Traditional, relevant related support schemes

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
RADAR				
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Valid	Not checked	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
	Checked	6	22,2	22,2	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 48: Traditional, relevant related support schemes

Data_Resources5: Traditional, relevant related support schemes (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
Financial support to cover salaries of persons with disabilities; refund of expenses to equip or adapt a workplace for an employee with disability; financial assistance to start an economic activity guaranteed by law indicated above in the Act on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons;	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (www.pfron.org.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Social security agencies, self help groups, blind unions, Project BUNDESSACHE: https://www.bundessache.at/de/links (Job info and job announcements in public / governmental institutions in Austria)	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
State Rehabilitation fund	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 49: Traditional, relevant related support schemes (free text)

- **Traditional job profiles**

Data_Resources5: Traditional job profiles

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16	59,3	59,3	59,3
Checked	11	40,7	40,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 50: Traditional job profiles

Data_Resources5: Traditional job profiles (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16	59,3	59,3	59,3
blind: telephone operators, Hungary: bakery at blind school, massage	1	3,7	3,7	63,0
full-time employee; on a civil law agreement; own business https://www.pracuj.pl/ , https://www.ngo.pl/	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
Massage therapist, telemarketer;	1	3,7	3,7	74,1

massage therapist	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
Massage, physiotherapy, basket weaving, telephone central, office	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
masseur; office clerk; telemarketer; musician; teacher	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Masseurs, blind musicians, call center staff, telemarketers, machine operators	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
masseurs; telemarketers; experts in IT and assistive technologies for persons with disabilities	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
No idea. Probably simple manual (?) jobs if the worker is completely blind.	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
switchboard operator telephone operator;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	0

Table 51: Traditional job profiles (free text)

- **Traditional employers**

Data_Resources5: Traditional employers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	17	63,0	63,0	63,0
	Checked	10	37,0	37,0	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 52: Traditional employers

Data_Resources5: Traditional employers (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17	63,0	63,0	63,0
Clinics and hospitals for massagists; NGOs; own business; education at all levels of education	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
cooperatives employing blind and visually impaired people, sheltered workshops; professional activity institutions;	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
Cooperatives; Vocational Development and Training Centres; Health Centres and Massage Parlours; NGOs	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
Federal / Regional government / insurance companies / unions for the blind / public institutions	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
hospitals; private massage centres; call centres	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
https://www.pracuj.pl/ , https://www.ngo.pl/	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Massage center / room in Laski; https://www.laski.edu.pl/pl/gabinet-masazu ; Massage center / room Touch of the Wind; https://dotykwiatru.pl/ ; Zielinet	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Call center; http://www.zielinet.com/	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	92,6

Polish Association of the Blind (www.pzn.org.pl); Chance for the Blind Foundation (www.szansadlaniewidomych.org); altix.pl	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
public authorities, Statistics Austria, other public bodies, banks, large companies, rail	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 53: Traditional employers (free text)

14. Can you point us to new job opportunities and relevant related support schemes directed to blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- **Related, relevant support schemes**

Data_Resources6: related, relevant support schemes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
	Checked	6	22,2	22,2	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 54: related, relevant support schemes

Data_Resources6: related, relevant support schemes (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		21	77,8	77,8	77,8
	from State Rehabilitation fund	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
	https://www.tec-innovation.com/INNOMAKE/	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
	National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (www.pfron.org.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
	No idea	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
	personal assistance at the workplace	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	Support of Persons with Disabilities by the Municipality of Warsaw; https://politykaspoleczna.um.warszawa.pl/wspolpraca	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 55: related, relevant support schemes (free text)

- **New, emerging job profiles**

Data_Resources6: new, emerging job profiles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
	Checked	6	22,2	22,2	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 56: new, emerging job profiles

Data_Resources6: new, emerging job profiles (free text)

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	Frequency	Valid Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
coach / assistant; coaching	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
coders, artists, bloggers,	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
IT specialist, Biotechnology, Data scientist	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
waiter in the restaurant (Different restaurant); IT trainers	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
websites accessibility experts, smartphone apps accessibility experts, accessibility experts	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 57: new, emerging job profiles (free text)

- **New, emerging job areas**

Data_Resources6: new, emerging job areas

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
Not checked	9	33,3	33,3	100,0
Checked	27	100,0	100,0	
Total				

Table 58: new, emerging job areas

Data_Resources6: new, emerging job areas (free text)

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
blind: music, digitalisation, legal affairs, arts, sight impaired: basically all areas are open	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
Call center	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
https://www.tec-innovation.com/INNOMAKE/	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
IT	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
IT specialist, Biotechnology, Data scientist	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Telework	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Waiters; https://restauracjadifferent.pl/ ; Researcher searching for the info in Internet	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
work requiring computer work, provided that systems and software, applications available for magnifying programs and screen reading are used;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 59: new, emerging job areas (free text)

- **New, emerging employers**

Data_Resources6: new, emerging employers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	19	70,4	70,4	70,4
	Checked	8	29,6	29,6	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 60: new, emerging employers

Data_Resources6: new, emerging employers (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	development projects for aids	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
	Different restaurant (restauracjadifferent.pl); Invisible exhibition (https://niewidzialna.pl/en)	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
	e.g. Mikrotech	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
	Modern technologies, computer training programs for the disabled people;	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
	No idea	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
	Public institutions, call center;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
	Restaurant "blind waiters; https://restauracjadifferent.pl/	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	Web service owners; developers of apps for mobile devices	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 61: new, emerging employers (free text)

15. Can you point us to data and resources concerning Assistive Technology (AT) and ICT (information and communication technologies) and relevant support schemes for blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Tick appropriate and give us title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources!

- **relevant related support schemes**

Data_Resources7: relevant related support schemes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	22	81,5	81,5	81,5
	Checked	5	18,5	18,5	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 62: relevant related support schemes

Data_Resources7: relevant related support schemes (free text)

	Fr eq ue nc y	Perc ent	Vali d Perc ent	Cum ulati ve Perc ent
Valid	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
Active self-government programme (https://www.pfron.org.pl/en/the-fund/programy-i-zadania-pfron/programy-i-zadania-real/active-self-government-programme/); Elimination of communication barriers programme (https://www.pfron.org.pl/osoby-niepelnosprawne/sprawna-komunikacja/likwidacja-barier-w-komunikowaniu/)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Active-self-government programme; Overcominn barriers;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Powiat Family Assistance Centers co-finance from State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People under various activities: Active Self-Government (module for people with visual impairments), removing communication barriers and removing technical barriers;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 63: relevant related support schemes (free text)

- **accessibility measures in general**

Data_Resources7: accessibility measures in general

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Not checked	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
Checked	6	22,2	22,2	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 64: accessibility measures in general

Data_Resources7: accessibility measures in general (free text)

	Fr eq ue nc y	Perc ent	Vali d Perc ent	Cum ulati ve Perc ent
Valid	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
Digital Accessibility Act; the obligation to adapt the websites and applications of public institutions to WCAG 2.0 standards;	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Internet;smartphone; screen-reading software;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
The Act on Website Accessibility of April 4th 2019; Accessibility Plus program - actions to improve accessibility for people with disabilities;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 65: accessibility measures in general (free text)

- **AT and ICT training in place**

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Data_Resources7: AT and ICT training in place

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	19	70,4	70,4	70,4
	Checked	8	29,6	29,6	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 66: AT and ICT training in place

Data_Resources7: AT and ICT training in place (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19	70,4	70,4	70,4
BBRZ RISS	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
Coming from AT providers or private institutions / blind unions	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
e.g. Companies selling IT and assistive technology for the blind; Vis Maior Foundation	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Training in the field of acquired computer equipment for people with disabilities under the "Active-Self government" program; training in hardware and software operation carried out by non-governmental organizations under local, regional and national projects	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
trainings under the "Active -Self Government program"; trainings implemented as part of projects financed from public funds by non-governmental organizations;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
www.altix.pl	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
www.altix.pl; www.ece.pl;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 67: AT and ICT training in place (free text)

- **AT types and tools in use**

Data_Resources7: AT types and tools in use

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	20	74,1	74,1	74,1
	Checked	7	25,9	25,9	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 68: AT types and tools in use

Data_Resources7: AT types and tools in use (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	22	81,5	81,5	81,5

Braille display, cane, cameras, screen reader, magnifying glasses, glasses	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Computers with screen readers such as Jaws, NVDA, Window-Eyes (which is disappearing); iPhony; Braille displays such as Actilino and Braillesense	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
computers; screen readers; screen magnifiers for low-vision computer users; smartphones	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
IOS; Android	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 69: AT types and tools in use (free text)

- **Provision**

Data_Resources7: provision

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
	Checked	9	33,3	33,3	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table: provision

Data_Resources7: provision (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		18	66,7	66,7	66,7
	As above mentioned co-financing programs; funding for the workplace	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
	AT provider	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
	Companies providing IT for the blind, e.g. ECE (www.ece.com.pl); Medison (sklep.medison.info); Altix (www.altix.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
	https://www.fsw.at/p/mobilitaetstraining	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
	No idea	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
	the "Active-Self Government program"; tasks for eliminating communication and technical barriers; both of these tasks implemented by poviats from the resources of the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled people: www.pfron.org.pl	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
	VIDEBIS GmbH	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
	www.altix.pl ; lumen.pl	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	www.altix.pl ; www.ece.pl ;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 70: provision (free text)

- **Funding**

Data_Resources7: funding

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		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	16	59,3	59,3	59,3
	Checked	11	40,7	40,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 71: funding

Data_Resources7: funding (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16	59,3	59,3	59,3
Adaptations of workplaces (Social security agency of the federal ministry of social affairs) (SMS)	1	3,7	3,7	63,0
Financial assistance to purchase rehabilitation equipment; overcoming communication barriers, new technologies, financial support for students: https://pzn.org.pl/programy-dla-niewidomych-dotyczace-zakupu-i-naprawy-sprzetu/ ; The program Active self-government in Warsaw: https://wcpr.pl/nasze-uslugi/osoby-niepelnospawne/programy-pfron/ ; overcoming communication barriers financed by National Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons: https://www.pfron.org.pl/osoby-niepelnospawne/sprawna-komunikacja/likwidacja-barier-w-komunikowaniu/	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
https://www.fsw.at	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons - "Active self-government" programme	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (www.pfron.org.pl) - Self-government programme and Elimination of communication barriers programme (https://www.pfron.org.pl/osoby-niepelnospawne/sprawna-komunikacja/likwidacja-barier-w-komunikowaniu/)	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
regional government, social security agency and ministry	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Self government programme; //www.pfron.org.pl/ofunduszu/programy-i-zadania-pfron/programy-i-zadania-real/aktywny-samorzad/	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Social security agency of the federal ministry of social affairs (SMS)	1	3,7	3,7	92,6

The "Active-Self government" program co-financing the purchase of computer equipment, software and possible training in its use from fund from The State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People; program for overcoming communication and technical barriers - co-financing from The State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People implemented by Poviát Family Support Center;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
you know at least all I know	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 72: funding (free text)

16. Can you point us to (resources and info on) obstacles and barriers for the employment of blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Enter all appropriate, separated by ; (semicolon)

- We need title/name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources

Data_Resources8: [01]

	Freq uen cy	Perc ent	Vali d Perc ent	Cumul ative Perc ent
Valid	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
Austrian Blind Union website on best practice concerning labour market inclusion for blind persons - https://www.blindenverband.at/de/information/broschueren/88/Gute-Beschaefigungspraktiken-fuer-blinde-und-sehbehinderte-Menschen-in-Europa	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
Fears and reservations of employers that blind people will be less effective (privileges of persons with disabilities, shortened working time, more holidays and increased probability of sick-leave), lack of proper adaptation of the workplace and institution for a blind person, insufficient information about the potential of a blind person, lack of awareness and fear of improper behaviour towards a disabled employee, fear to be in charge of additional duties related to proper documentation and of additional controls regarding environment of a disabled person in the company https://www.pfron.org.pl https://apcz.umk.pl/czasopisma/index.php/PBE/article/view/9873 http://mikroekonomia.net/system/publication_files/92/original/19.pdf?1314879895	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
https://www.unss.sk/	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
lack of knowledge; non-adjustment of the workplace; fear of employing a person with a disability	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
mental barriers, problems with the availability of programs and devices, applications;	1	3,7	3,7	85,2

National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (www.pfron.org.pl); Disability portal www.niepelnosprawni.pl	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
still the idea that a person with disabilities cannot be dismissed; partly, people are not sufficiently motivated	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
The human sense is the eyesight. Therefore the biggest obstacle for the blind is their blindness.	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
www.pzn.org.pl	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 73: obstacles and barriers for the employment

17. Can you point us to other important related information / studies / resources / support schemes on / for blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Enter all appropriate, separated by ; (semicolon)

- We need title/name, short description and eventually a URL to the resources

Data_Resources9: [01]

	Fr eq ue nc y	Perc ent	Vali d Perc ent	Cum ulati ve Perc ent
Valid	22	81,5	81,5	81,5
Best practice guide to employment: https://www.blindenverband.at/de/information/broschueren/88/Gute-Beschaeftigungspraktiken-fuer-blinde-und-sehbehinderte-Menschen-in-Europa	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
http://aktywujprace.pl/oferty_pracy/	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
https://www.unss.sk/	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Various publications concerning blind persons and their possibilities: BÅ,aziak M., KaÅ,kus A. (2002). Conditons of Optimised Functioning of Visually Impaired Students in Integrated Teaching, the bulletin "SzkoÅ,a Specjalna", no 5, pp 290-295.; also: http://www.adaptacje.uw.edu.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=36&Itemid=21 ; CzerwiÅ„ska, K. (2007). "Needs and possibilities of Partially Sighted" in: D. Gorajewska (red.), "We get to know persons with disabilities. (pages.43-50). Warsaw: Integration Association.; Duffy, M., Maj. W. (2000) Evaluation and adaptation of a workplace for Blind and Low vision persons. in: Guidebook for employers of the blind and low vision persons. AWARE Europe Foundation, Warsaw http://www.idn.org.pl/aware-europe) ; Nowacka-Pyrlik, R. (2008) Basic rehabilitation of blind and low vision adults, particularly elderly people â€“ based on experience and projects carried out in the Central Rehabilitation Clinic of the Polish Association of the Blind in Warsaw.	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 74: other important related information / studies / resources / support schemes

18. Can you point us to the following stakeholders working for / with blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the stakeholder – if not done so already before!

• **Governmental institutions**

Stakeholders: governmental institutions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	10	37,0	37,0	37,0
	Checked	17	63,0	63,0	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 75: governmental institutions

Stakeholders: governmental institutions (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10	37,0	37,0	37,0
at a small scale: Ministry of Transport	1	3,7	3,7	40,7
Behindertenanwalt	1	3,7	3,7	44,4
Biuro PeÅ, nomocnika RzÄ...du ds. OsÃ³b NiepeÅ, nosprawnych, PeÅ, nomocnik RzÄ...du ds. OsÃ³b NiepeÅ, nosprawnych, Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich	1	3,7	3,7	48,1
government plenipotentiary for disabled persons operating within the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy; Poviät Family Support Centers, National Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People;	1	3,7	3,7	51,9
https://www.unss.sk	1	3,7	3,7	55,6
Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy; PFRON	1	3,7	3,7	59,3
Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Policy; Ministry of Digitization; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Finance;	1	3,7	3,7	63,0
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
Ö-HTB (Austrian help for the deaf blind); Sinnesbehindert (association "sensory disabled"); Fonds Social Vienna (FSW); County government / social security departments (subsidies, rehabilitation, funding); Social Security Agency - esp. For labour market a	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/ ; National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (PFRON) https://www.pfron.org.pl	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
Polskie Stowarzyszenie Niewidomych (Polish Association of the Blind) - if it is a government institution	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
Social Security Agency (SMS) - https://www.sozialministeriumservice.at/	2	7,4	7,4	85,2

Social security agency: Sozialministeriumsservice,	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
The Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People (www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl); Ministry of Digital Affairs; Ministry of National Education; National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 76: governmental institutions (free text)

- **Educators / education agencies**

Stakeholders: educators / education agencies

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
	Checked	6	22,2	22,2	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 77: educators / education agencies

Stakeholders: educators / education agencies (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
Inclusive and special schools for the blind: ZIS Zinckgasse & BBI, Vienna; Odilieninstitute, Graz	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
Instytut Tyflologiczny PZN, Polski Związek Niewidomych, niepelnosprawni.org.pl, Integracja, Vis Maior	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
non-governmental organizations which, as part of their statutory objectives, have the support of people with vision problems;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Polish Association of the Blind www.pzn.org.pl; Foundation VIS Maior www.fundacjavismaior.pl; Chance for the Blind www.szansadlaniewidomych.org; FIRR www.firr.org.pl	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
special schools e.g. ; www.laski.edu.pl; www.fundacjavismaior.pl;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 78: educators / education agencies (free text)

- **end user organisations active especially for blind and partially sighted people**

Stakeholders: end user organisations active especially for blind and partially sighted people

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Not checked	12	44,4	44,4	44,4
	Checked	15	55,6	55,6	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 79: end user organisations active especially for blind and partially sighted people

Stakeholders: end user organisations active especially for blind and partially sighted people (free text)

	Freq uen cy	Perc ent	Vali d Perc ent	Cum ulati ve Perc ent
Valid	12	44,4	44,4	44,4
"League of the golden thread" (Lega del filo d'oro) especially for deaf-blind people www.legadelfilodoro.it	1	3,7	3,7	48,1
Austrian Blind Union	1	3,7	3,7	51,9
Chance for the Blind Foundation (www.szansadlaniewidomych.org); Polish Association of the Blind (www.pzn.org.pl); Vis Maior Foundation (fundacjavismaior.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	55,6
Hilfsgemeinschaft (Self Help Group for the Blind and Partially Sighted), Austrian Blind Union, "Association Eye and Ear", Blickkontakt (Visual Contact - Self Help Group for the Sighted, Blind and Partially Sighted), Social security institutions for the Blind	1	3,7	3,7	59,3
https://oehtb.at/ ; https://www.blindenverband.at/ ; https://www.assistenz24.at/ ; https://www.inclusion24.com/	1	3,7	3,7	63,0
Instytut Tyflogiczny PZN, Polski ZwiÄ...zek Niewidomych, niepełnosprawni.org.pl, Fundacja Kultury Bez Barrier, Fundacja Aktywizacja	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
Polish Association of the Blind www.pzn.org.pl ; Foundation of Polish Blind www.trakt.org.pl ; VIS Maior Foundation www.fundacjavismaior.pl ; Foundation of Regional Development www.firr.org.pl ; Society for the Care of the Blind; numerous other organizations operating throughout the country for the blind and visually impaired;	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
Polish Association of the Blind (www.pzn.org.pl); The Deaf Blind Association (www.tpg.org.pl); Vis Maior Foundation (fundacjavismaior.pl); Brajlowka; Swiat wg Ludwika Braille'a; Trakt Foundation	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
Polish Association of the Blind; https://pzn.org.pl/ ; Chance for the Blind Foundation (NGO) http://www.szansadlaniewidomych.org/ ; Work for the Blind Foundation (NGO); http://www.fpdn.org.pl/	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
Polish Association of the Blind; The Foundation for the Blind and Partially Sighted "Trakt"; Vis Maior Foundation	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
PZN; FIRR, VIS MAIOR	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
usher-taubblind.at ; usher-syndrom.at	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
www.bizeps.or.at ; Austrian Blind Union	1	3,7	3,7	96,3

www.pzn.org.pl; www.fundacjavismaior.pl;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 80: end user organisations active especially for blind and partially sighted people (free text)

- **labour market service providers**

Stakeholders: labour market service providers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
	Checked	9	33,3	33,3	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 81: labour market service providers

Stakeholders: labour market service providers (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
Assistance at Workplace	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
Austrian Federal Labour Market Agency (AMS); Vocational & Educational Rehabilitation Institute (BBRZ);	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
BBRZ RISS	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
Chance for the Blind Foundation (www.szansadlaniewidomych.org); Polish Association of the Blind (www.pzn.org.pl); Vis Maior Foundation (fundacjavismaior.pl); www.altix.pl	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
https://www.myability.org/	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Labour Office (Biuro Pracy)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Non-governmental organizations that run projects related to the employment of people with disabilities;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
Polski Związek Niewidomych, Fundacja Kultury Bez Barrier, Fundacja Aktywizacja,	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 82: labour market service providers (free text)

- **most important policy maker(s)**

Stakeholders: most important policy maker(s)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
	Checked	9	33,3	33,3	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 83: most important policy maker(s)

Stakeholders: most important policy maker(s) (free text)

RADAR	Page	TEAF
Code 2019-1-IT01-KA202-007396 - CUP G15G19000150006	181	Training-Employability-Accessibility Framework

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19	70,4	70,4	70,4
Association Hilfgemeinschaft (Self Help and Lobbying Institution for the Blind and Partially Sighted in Austria), Ö- BR (Umbr	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
Jaroslaw Kaczynski	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
Maybe Polish Blind Union?	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (www.pfron.org.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Officials from labor, family and social policy departments; from education and finance departments;	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Sejm and Senat; The Council of Ministers;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Spokespersons on disability of the Austrian Parliament and the political parties; Austrian federal Advocate for the Disabled - D	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
the Government Plenipotentiary of persons with disabilities;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 84: most important policy maker(s) (free text)

- **other important stakeholders**

Stakeholders: other important stakeholders

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
Not checked	6	22,2	22,2	100,0
Checked	27	100,0	100,0	
Total				

Table 85: other important stakeholders

Stakeholders: other important stakeholders (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
Bizeps.co.at; Austrian Blind Union; Association Hilfgemeinschaft with all diverse departments (e.g. Technical Assistance etc.).	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
integriert studieren (JKU)	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Local / regional job offices ; Local centres of suport for families; Thereapeutic workshops that specialise in assistance for blind people (WTZ) i.e.: http://www.tpdplock.pl/index.php/k2/wtz-niewidomi ; http://wtz.npn.com.pl/	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
PFRON,	1	3,7	3,7	96,3

VIDEBIS	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	0

Table 86: other important stakeholders (free text)

19. Can you point us to the following stakeholders working for / with blind and partially sighted people in your country?

Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the stakeholder – if not done so already before!

- **Support with personal and work assistance schemes**

Support Schemes: Support with personal and work assistance schemes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	16	59,3	61,5	61,5
	Checked	10	37,0	38,5	100,0
	Total	26	96,3	100,0	
Missing	System	1	3,7		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 87: Support with personal and work assistance schemes

Support Schemes: Support with personal and work assistance schemes (free text)

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17	63,0	63,0
Association "Hilfsgemeinschaft", VIDEBIS (Company Counseling and selling assistive Technologies), ZIS Zinckgasse (primary and secondary school educating blind and partially sighted pupils in inclusive classes)	1	3,7	3,7
Chance for the Blind Foundation (www.szansadlaniewidomych.org); Polish Association of the Blind (www.pzn.org.pl); Vis Maior Foundation (fundacjavismaior.pl); www.altix.pl	1	3,7	3,7
Fundacion ONCE; Fundacion Tecnologia Social	1	3,7	3,7
GESDO Linz with assistance for deaf blind persons	1	3,7	3,7
Job coach - employed in projects carried out by NGOs	1	3,7	3,7
no permanent individual support programs guaranteed by law; there are such programs implemented as part of projects implemented by non-governmental organizations from public funds;	1	3,7	3,7
PFRON, Fundacja Aktywizacja, PZN, Vis Maior	1	3,7	3,7
Polish Blind Union?	1	3,7	3,7
Social Security Agency (SMS)	1	3,7	3,7
There is a Graduate program; Individual Rehabilitation Program;	1	3,7	3,7
Total	27	100,0	100,0

Table 88: Support Schemes: Support with personal and work assistance schemes (free text)

- **Information and (Re-)Qualification schemes to prepare blind and partially sighted people for the 1st labour market**

Support Schemes: Information and (Re-)Qualification schemes to prepare blind and partially sighted people for the 1st...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	20	74,1	76,9	76,9
	Checked	6	22,2	23,1	100,0
	Total	26	96,3	100,0	
Missing	System	1	3,7		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 89: Information and (Re-)Qualification schemes to prepare blind and partially sighted people

Support Schemes: Information and (Re-)Qualification schemes to prepare blind and partially sighted people for the 1st...

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
Fundacja Aktywizacja, Agata SpaÅa - personal instructor	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
none of relevance	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
professional trainings within projects conducted by NGOs; suport provided by coach: te possibility of traineeship for persons registered at local job Offices . ; https://warszawa.praca.gov.pl/osoby-z-niepelnosprawnoscia-poszukujace-pracy	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Rehabilitation and Training Centre in Bydgoszcz (www.oris.org.pl); Programme "Preparation and implementation of the model comprehensive rehabilitation enabling entering the labour market" carried out by the National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons with the Social Security Institution (www.rehabilitacjakompleksowa.pfron.org.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
The Graduate program	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 90: Information and (Re-)Qualification schemes to prepare blind and partially sighted people (free text)

- **Support schemes and benefits / financial support for COMPANIES employing (also) blind and partially sighted people?**

Support Schemes: Support schemes and benefits / financial support for COMPANIES employing (also) blind and partially ...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	14	51,9	53,8	53,8

	Checked	12	44,4	46,2	100,0
	Total	26	96,3	100,0	
Missing	System	1	3,7		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 91: Support schemes and benefits / financial support for COMPANIES

Support Schemes: Support schemes and benefits / financial support for COMPANIES employing (also) blind and partially ...

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16	59,3	59,3	59,3
Co-financing service system	1	3,7	3,7	63,0
https://www.sod.pfron.org.pl/	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People (www.pfron.org.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons (www.pfron.org.pl)	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
payroll subsidies; support in equipping work stations; financial support for social cooperatives;	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
public subsidies and reduction of penalty payment (Ausgleichstaxe)	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Refund of costs to adapt or modify workplace for persons with disabilities, refund of costs of Staff helping persons with disabilities, refund of a training for such assistant, partial refund of salaries and social insurance fees,	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Social security agency	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People; www.pfron.org.pl ;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 92: Support schemes and benefits / financial support for COMPANIES (free text)

- **Specific / inclusive novel job market tools (e.g. websites connecting companies and blind / partially sighted job seekers)?**

Support Schemes: Specific / inclusive novel job market tools (e.g. websites connecting companies and blind / partiall...

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24	88,9	88,9	88,9
different facebook groups	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
http://aktywizacja.org.pl/	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 93: Specific / inclusive novel job market tools

- **Other related support schemes for blind and partially sighted people in your country?**

Support Schemes: Other related support schemes for blind and partially sighted people in your country?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	22	81,5	84,6	84,6
	Checked	4	14,8	15,4	100,0
	Total	26	96,3	100,0	
Missing	System	1	3,7		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 94: Other related support schemes

Support Schemes: Other related support schemes for blind and partially sighted people in your country? (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24	88,9	88,9	88,9
"Aktywny Absolwent" (PZN/PFRON)	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
Forms of support for unemployed persons with disabilities: 1. Traineeships disabled job seekers registered in a local job Office, persons with disabilities with no employment (National Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons), paid traineeship the sum of 120% of unemployment benefits, according to art. 2, art. 53. Item 6 act on promotion of employment and institutions of the labour market ; 2. Intervention actions: for employees seeking for disabled unemployed persons, addressed to unemployed persons with disabilities (FRON), partial refund of salaries for a period of 6, 12, 18 or 24 months up to the amount of unemployment benefits, also social insurance fees. ; 3. Trainings: for disabled, registered unemployed seeking for employment, addressed to persons with disabilities who are unemployed financed by PFRON, training costs cannot exceed the amount 10 times greater than an average salary, no scholarship is paid. ; 4. Financial assistance to set up own company, agricultural activity or social cooperative:	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 95: Other related support schemes (free text)

20. Can you point us to the relevant legislation, policies and guidelines for blind and partially sighted people in your country on...

Tick appropriate and give us a title / name, short description and eventually a URL to the stakeholder – if not done so already before!

- **Social security service and measures**

Policy Framework: social security services and measures

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	18	66,7	72,0	72,0
	Checked	7	25,9	28,0	100,0
	Total	25	92,6	100,0	
Missing	System	2	7,4		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 96: social security services and measures

Policy Framework: social security services and measures (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	77,8	77,8	77,8
Fonds Social Vienna (County agency for social security) FSW; Social Security Agency (SMS); County governments and departments fo	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Pensions Act	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Social security and pension system (ASVG) - vocational rehabilitation services	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
The Act of 17 December 1998 on pensions from the social insurance fund; The Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
The Act on Social Pension; The Act on Social Benefits from Social Security System; The Act on Family Benefits	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 97: social security services and measures (free text)

- **Provision and funding of Assistive technologies**

Policy Framework: provision and funding of Assistive Technologies

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	16	59,3	64,0	64,0
	Checked	9	33,3	36,0	100,0
	Total	25	92,6	100,0	
Missing	System	2	7,4		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 98: provision and funding of Assistive Technologies

Policy Framework: provision and funding of Assistive Technologies (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19	70,4	70,4	70,4
https://pzn.org.pl/programy-dla-niewidomych-dotyczace-zakupu-i-naprawy-sprzetu/ ("Aktywny SamorzÄ...d")	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
https://www.sozialministeriumservice.at/	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
NOWHERE!	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
Subsidies for vocational rehabilitation within the social security and welfare agency (SMS)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Tasks of the The State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People; support programs, including SOD, The "Active-Self government"	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
The Act of 27 August 1997 on professional and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people;	2	7,4	7,4	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 99: provision and funding of Assistive Technologies (free text)

- **Personal assistance (in school / continuing education, at work and during leisure time)**

Policy Framework: personal assistance (in school / continuing education, at work and during leisure time)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19	70,4	76,0	76,0
Not checked	6	22,2	24,0	100,0
Checked	25	92,6	100,0	
Total	27	100,0		
Missing	2	7,4		
System				
Total	27	100,0		

Table 100: personal assistance (in school / continuing education, at work and during leisure time)

Policy Framework: personal assistance (in school / continuing education, at work and during leisure time) (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
Nuns at Laski near Warsaw - support for a Catholic order	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Schools in Poland receive money from the State for each pupil; the amount of the money received is increased in the case of a pupil with disability; the money can be spent on employing a teacher to assist a disable learner; in some cities persons with disabilities may engage personal assistants	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
The "Student" program currently the second module of the "Active-Self government" program	1	3,7	3,7	96,3

the Act of 14 December 2016 Educational Law; Act of 27 August 1997 on professional and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 101: personal assistance (in school / continuing education, at work and during leisure time) (free text)

- **Education (inclusive / special, at all levels)**

Policy Framework: education (inclusive / special, at all levels)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	22	81,5	88,0	88,0
	Checked	3	11,1	12,0	100,0
	Total	25	92,6	100,0	
Missing	System	2	7,4		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 102: education (inclusive / special, at all levels)

Policy Framework: education (inclusive / special, at all levels) (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		24	88,9	88,9	88,9
	https://bon.uw.edu.pl/kontakt/ (Uniwersytet Warszawski)	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
	REGULATION OF THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION of 9 August 2017 on the conditions for organizing education, upbringing and care for disabled children and youth, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	The Act of 14 December 2016 on Educational Law;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total		27	100,0	100,0	

Table 103: education (inclusive / special, at all levels) (free text)

- **employment (self-employed, 1st, 2nd labour market, supported / sheltered)**

Policy Framework: employment (self-employed, 1st, 2nd labour market, supported / sheltered)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	19	70,4	76,0	76,0
	Checked	6	22,2	24,0	100,0
	Total	25	92,6	100,0	
Missing	System	2	7,4		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 104: employment (self-employed, 1st, 2nd labour market, supported / sheltered)

Policy Framework: employment (self-employed, 1st, 2nd labour market, supported / sheltered) (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	22	81,5	81,5	81,5
Disability Employment Act - Federal law on the vocational inclusion of people with disabilities ("Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz")	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
https://www.pfron.org.pl/fileadmin/ftp/Dobre_praktyki/UE/Wsparcie_osob_niewidomych_na_rynku_pracy_II.pdf	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
The Act of 27 August 1997 on professional and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people;	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
The Act of 27 August 1997 on professional and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people; The Act of 20 April 2004 on employment promotion and labor market institutions;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
The Act on Social and Vocational Rehabilitation	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 105: employment (self-employed, 1st, 2nd labour market, supported / sheltered) (free text)

- **anti/non – discrimination**

Policy Framework: anti / non discrimination

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Not checked	20	74,1	80,0	80,0
Checked	5	18,5	20,0	100,0
Total	25	92,6	100,0	
Missing				
System	2	7,4		
Total	27	100,0		

Table 106: Policy Framework: anti / non discrimination

Policy Framework: anti / non discrimination (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	23	85,2	85,2	85,2
"Bizeps", Ö-AR - Austrian Council Rehabilitation, Disability Council, Klagsverband (Litigation Association of NGOs Against Discrimination), Monitoringausschuss (Association monitoring Discrimination, Accessibility and Equality of the Disabled)	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
Disability Advocate following §13 of the federal Law on the equality of people with Disabilities (BGStG); §§ 13b ff Federal Charta on People with Disabilities (BBG)	1	3,7	3,7	92,6

The Act of 26 June 1974 - Labor Code; The Act of 3 December 2010 on the implementation of certain European Union provisions in the field of equal treatment; United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
There is no discrimination of any kind in Poland, and absolutely none of blind and visually-impaired people.	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 107 : Policy Framework: anti / non discrimination (free text)

- **accessibility**

Policy Framework: accessibility

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	15	55,6	60,0	60,0
	Checked	10	37,0	40,0	100,0
	Total	25	92,6	100,0	
Missing	System	2	7,4		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 108: accessibility

Policy Framework: accessibility (free text)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	66,7	66,7	66,7
"Bizeps", Ö-AR - Austrian Council Rehabilitation, Disability Council, Klagsverband (Litigation Association of NGOs Against Discrimination), Monitoringausschuss (Association monitoring Discrimination, Accessibility and Equality of the Disabled)	1	3,7	3,7	70,4
Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital availability of websites and mobile applications of public entities; The ACT of 19 July 2019 on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs;	1	3,7	3,7	74,1
Federal Law on Web Accessibility (WZG)	1	3,7	3,7	77,8
http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/proc8.nsf/ustawy/3579_u.htm	1	3,7	3,7	81,5
Italian Blind Union - www.uiciechi.it	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
No idea	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
The "Accessibility Plus" program a package of statutory solutions, among others Act on the availability of websites and mobile applications from April 4 th , 2019.	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
The Act on Special Rights for Persons with the Severe Disability Level	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; The Act of 4 April 2019 on the digital availability of websites and mobile applications of public institutions; The Act of 19 July 2019. on ensuring accessibility for people with special needs; The Act of 7 July 1994 - Construction Law; The Act of 7 February 1994 on copyright and related rights;	1	3,7	3,7	100,0

Total	27	100,0	100,0	
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Table 109: accessibility (free text)

- **other relevant areas for blind and partially sighted people in your country**

Policy Framework: other relevant areas for blind and partially sighted people in your country

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	24	88,9	96,0	96,0
	Checked	1	3,7	4,0	100,0
	Total	25	92,6	100,0	
Missing	System	2	7,4		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 110: other relevant areas for blind and partially sighted people in your country

Policy Framework: other relevant areas for blind and partially sighted people in your country (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		26	96,3	96,3	96,3
	No idea	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 111: other relevant areas for blind and partially sighted people in your country (free text)

21. Is there anything else – apart from the questions already answered – you want to let us know concerning education and employment of blind and partially sighted people in your country?

- _____

Anything else: [01]

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	92,6	92,6	92,6
Please also take care about deafblind people that cannot see AND hear (be ist from birth or acquired throughout life) - please do not forget them!	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
these questions are to my mind more a matter of desk research than a survey. up to the last page, there is no opportunity to indicate whether a respondent is impaired himself, A clear distinction has to be made between blind and visually impaired persons but one cannot really compare those two groups. a clear absurdity	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 112: Anything else: [01]

Demographic Details_Text

This last part is to ask for some basic demography.

Please note:

As with the whole questionnaire, all answers, remarks and data are stored anonymised and on a secure server, only used for research within the project RADAR and deleted upon completion of the work in this project.

22. What is your year of birth?

Year of birth: _____

Year of birth

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	8	29,6	29,6	29,6
1958	1	3,7	3,7	33,3
1965	2	7,4	7,4	40,7
1968	1	3,7	3,7	44,4
1969	2	7,4	7,4	51,9
1974	3	11,1	11,1	63,0
1978	1	3,7	3,7	66,7
1979	4	14,8	14,8	81,5
1980	1	3,7	3,7	85,2
1983	1	3,7	3,7	88,9
1985	2	7,4	7,4	96,3
1991	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 113: Year of birth

23. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Diverse
- I don't want to answer

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	female	10	37,0	52,6	52,6
	male	9	33,3	47,4	100,0
	Total	19	70,4	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	4	14,8		
	I don't want to answer.	1	3,7		
	System	3	11,1		
	Total	8	29,6		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 114: gender

24. How would you rate your level of sight / vision?

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Tick appropriate level!

- Legally Blind
- Borderline between blind and partially sighted
- Partially sighted
- Sighted

Disability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Legally Blind	6	22,2	31,6	31,6
	Borderline between blind and partially sighted	1	3,7	5,3	36,8
	Partially sighted	1	3,7	5,3	42,1
	Sighted	8	29,6	42,1	84,2
	Other,	3	11,1	15,8	100,0
	Total	19	70,4	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	5	18,5		
	System	3	11,1		
	Total	8	29,6		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 115: rate your level of sight / vision

- Other

Disability: Other,

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24	88,9	88,9	88,9
big sight defect	1	3,7	3,7	92,6
I'm totally unrelated to the blind world, thank God for that. But I'm aware of it, hence my contribution.	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
taubblind	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 116: Disability: Other

25. What is your (highest) education level?

Select the highest level of qualification you have obtained.

- Finished school with no qualifications
- Still in school
- Secondary school-leaving certificate
- High school diploma / secondary school-leaving certificate or equivalent
- Completed apprenticeship
- Vocational baccalaureate diploma, vocational secondary certification
- Higher education entrance qualification

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree

highest level of qualification

		Fr eq ue nc y	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cum ulativ e Per cent
Valid	Secondary school-leaving certificate	1	3,7	4,8	4,8
	High school diploma / secondary school-leaving certificate or equivalent	2	7,4	9,5	14,3
	Vocational baccalaureate diploma, vocational secondary certification	1	3,7	4,8	19,0
	Bachelor`s degree	1	3,7	4,8	23,8
	Master`s degree	13	48,1	61,9	85,7
	Other degree - please enter:	3	11,1	14,3	100,0
	Total	21	77,8	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	3	11,1		
	System	3	11,1		
	Total	6	22,2		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 117: highest level of qualification

- **Other degree – please mention _____**

Other degree - please enter

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	92,6	92,6	92,6
Habilitation	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
postgraduate studies	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 118: highest level of qualification

26. Which stakeholder group would you identify yourself with?

Tick all appropriate!

- **End-users**

Stakeholder_Group: End-users

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	13	48,1	54,2	54,2
	Checked	11	40,7	45,8	100,0
	Total	24	88,9	100,0	
Missing	System	3	11,1		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 119: Stakeholder_Group: End-users

- **Employer / a company hiring people (amongst them: blind and partially sighted people)**

Stakeholder_Group: Employer / a company hiring people (amongst them: blind and partially sighted people)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	16	59,3	66,7	66,7
	Checked	8	29,6	33,3	100,0
	Total	24	88,9	100,0	
Missing	System	3	11,1		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 120: Employer / a company hiring people

- **Policy make / governmental institution**

Stakeholder_Group: Policy maker / governmental institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	20	74,1	83,3	83,3
	Checked	4	14,8	16,7	100,0
	Total	24	88,9	100,0	
Missing	System	3	11,1		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 121: Policy maker

- **Public / private educator working with blind and partially sighted learners**

Stakeholder_Group: Public / private educator working with blind and partially sighted learners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	22	81,5	91,7	91,7
	Checked	2	7,4	8,3	100,0
	Total	24	88,9	100,0	
Missing	System	3	11,1		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 122: Public / private educator

- **Lobbying / Self representation group / association (of blind and partially sighted people)**

Stakeholder_Group: Lobbying / Self representation group / association (of blind and partially sighted people)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	18	66,7	75,0	75,0
	Checked	6	22,2	25,0	100,0
	Total	24	88,9	100,0	
Missing	System	3	11,1		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 123: Lobbying / Self representation group / association

- **Non/governmental labour market service provider**

Stakeholder_Group: Non/governmental labour market service provider

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	19	70,4	79,2	79,2
	Checked	5	18,5	20,8	100,0
	Total	24	88,9	100,0	
Missing	System	3	11,1		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 124 : Non/governmental labour market service provider

- **Other... _____**

Stakeholder_Group: Other...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not checked	22	81,5	91,7	91,7
	Checked	2	7,4	8,3	100,0
	Total	24	88,9	100,0	
Missing	System	3	11,1		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 125: Stakeholder_Group: Other...

Stakeholder_Group: Other... (free text)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		25	92,6	92,6	92,6
	Freelancer	1	3,7	3,7	96,3
	VET provider	1	3,7	3,7	100,0
	Total	27	100,0	100,0	

Table 126: Stakeholder_Group: Other... (free text)

Interaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	26	96,3	100,0	100,0
Missing	Not answered	1	3,7		
Total		27	100,0		

Table 127: Interaction with Participants

We would like to thank you very much for your help. We thank you for completing this consultation and for sharing your experiences and knowledge with us!



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