

NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT
on
Informative sessions in Lithuania:
opinions and perceptions by people with disabilities

We Are Able to Work 2020

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2013



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1. KEY PROVISIONS OF THE LAW ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE DISABLED

On 1 July 2005 a new Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Social Integration of the Disabled¹ (hereinafter referred to as the Law) entered into force. The main goal of this Law is to ensure equal rights and opportunities for the disabled in the society, to define principles of social integration of the disabled, to determine the system of social integration, the preconditions and terms, as well as the institutions in charge of the implementation of social integration of the disabled, the assessment of disability and working capacity level, the provision of services in vocational rehabilitation, and the principles for the identification and meeting of special needs of the disabled.

The Law incorporates new concepts and definitions, introduces new definitions of the ‘disabled’ and ‘disability’, substituting the old ‘invalid’ and ‘invalidity’. All discriminative provisions highlighting the exclusiveness of an individual with disabilities were removed. The model of social integration of the disabled was set closer to models of the EU Member States, thus legally enforcing equal rights and opportunities of the disabled in the society.

The Law envisages the introduction of the new assessment system of disability and working capacity level. The assessment of working capacity instead of previously used invalidity assessment test creates more possibilities to assess an individual capacity to work in a more objective way, get medical and vocational rehabilitation services and benefits. Differentiation of disability level for individuals under 18 sets more favourable conditions for families bringing up and nursing children with severe and moderate disabilities.

2. DISABILITY AND WORKING CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the disability and working capacity level is delegated to the Disability and Working Capacity Assessment Authority under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the Authority).

The Authority is a public administration institution establishing the level of disability for persons under 18 and the level of working capacity for persons under 18 who are (were) insured with

¹ Law on Social Integration of the Disabled (*Official Gazette*, 2004, No. 83-2983).

social insurance and for persons older than 18 until the retirement age.

The Authority makes decisions concerning:

- the disability level, the cause and starting time of disability and its duration;
- the working capacity level, the cause and starting time of disability and its duration;
- the need for vocational rehabilitation services for individuals under 18, who are (were) insured by the state social insurance, and for individuals over 18 years of age;
- the nature of work and conditions for the disabled;
- the general initial assessment of special needs of the disabled.

Following the provisions of the Law, the level of working capacity is assessed taking into consideration the health status of a person and his capability to perform tasks according to the acquired qualification, to acquire a new qualification or to perform unskilled jobs after all other possibilities of medical and vocational rehabilitation have been used, including special assistance measures. Working capacity of an individual is assessed in percentage and the level is estimated in 5 points intervals, i.e.:

- if an individual is assessed to be of 0-25% working capacity, he/she is considered incapable of work;
- if an individual is assessed to be of 30-55% working capacity, he/she is considered partly capable of work;
- if an individual is assessed to be of 60-100% working capacity, he/she is considered capable of work.

When a person addresses the Authority concerning the assessment of working capacity, first of all, it will be estimated, referring to certain criteria if it is reasonable for the person to participate in the vocational rehabilitation programme.

When assessing the level of working capacity or disability of a person, special needs of the person are also assessed, i.e. special need for constant care, special need for constant assistance (supervision), special need for compensation of transport expenses and special need for compensation of expenses on purchase of a passenger car. Given the above special needs, compensations of the amount set in the legal acts are allocated for the person.

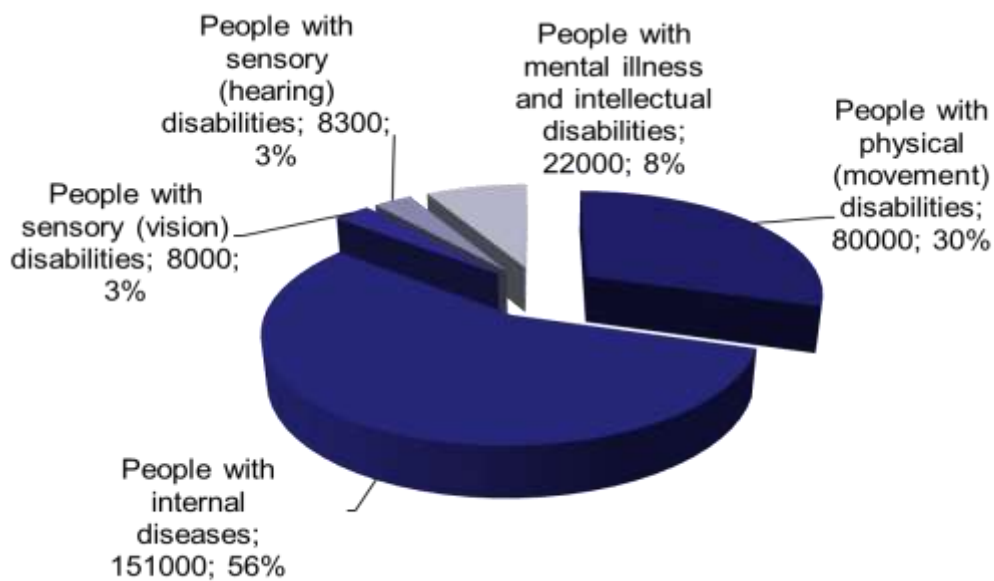
3. KEY INDICATORS OF DISABILITY IN LITHUANIA

A total number of the disabled people who were receiving disability pensions or allowances for their lost capacity for work was 260 121, this makes about 8,7 % of the whole population according data 2012. The trends for the distribution of the number of the disabled by the level of disability remain the same as during the previous year.

In 2013 in Lithuania there were 170 000 people with disabilities of working age and only 28 percent of them work (Employment Programme 2014-2020). This shows a very low level of employment of people with disabilities in comparison with the rest of population, because the unemployment of general population is about 10 per cent.

According to the level of working capacity, in 2011 there were 33 354 people having the lowest level of working capacity – 0-25 percent. These are people, who are considered to be incapable of work. The majority were people having established 30–40 percent of working capacity – 152 320 persons. Persons with the 45–55 percent of working capacity were 63 436. These two groups are considered to be the target group for vocational rehabilitation.

According to the approximate data of the year 2011, in Lithuania there were approximately 80 000 people with physical movement disabilities, 22 000 people with mental disorders, 16 300 people with sensoric disabilities, 151 000 having disability because of the internal diseases (Picture 1).



Picture 1 Number of people with disabilities according disabilities in Lithuania 2011

A rather high level of unemployment encourages people to seek for their acknowledgment as disabled, while a state social insurance pension for incapacity to work ensures though minimal, but stable means of subsistence.

4. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SYSTEM

The Law regulates an important link of the system of social integration of the disabled – vocational rehabilitation. In the Law vocational rehabilitation is defined as restoration of a person's capacity to work, professional competence and capacity to participate in the labour market or increase thereof by educational, social, psychological, rehabilitations and other means.

The following vocational rehabilitation services are provided: assessment of professional capacities; vocational guidance and consulting; restoration or training to acquire new vocational skills; assistance in finding a job. The purpose of vocational rehabilitation is to develop or restore working capacity of the disabled and increase their employability. It is implemented through several stages. First, the need for vocational rehabilitation services is established. The Disability and Working Capacity Assessment Authority that performs this function assesses medical (basic working capacity of the person), functional (number of hours that the person can work), professional (education, professional qualifications, work experience and working skills) and other (age of the person and motivation for vocational rehabilitation) criteria of every person addressing the Authority for assessment of working capacity level that influence the person's vocational rehabilitation and employability.

Having received the conclusion of the Authority confirming the need for vocational rehabilitation, the person in question shall have to apply to the Local Labour Exchange Office in the place of residence which issues a reference to the institution providing vocational rehabilitation services. Here an individual vocational rehabilitation programme is drafted for the person and the scheduled services are provided. When the vocational rehabilitation programme is completed, the person returns to the Disability and Working Capacity Assessment Authority for the final assessment of the working capacity level.

Persons participating in the vocational rehabilitation programme receive a vocational rehabilitation benefit. It is allocated and paid irrespective of other income received. The vocational

rehabilitation benefit is paid monthly starting from the first day of participation in the programme but for no longer than 180 calendar days. The amount of this benefit depends on whether the person is insured with all kinds of state social insurance or not. Where the person participating in the vocational rehabilitation programme is insured, the amount of the vocational rehabilitation benefit paid thereto by the State Social Insurance Fund and the payment procedure are set out in the Law on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance.

Where the person participating in this programme is not insured by the state social insurance or is insured only by the state social pension insurance, they receive a vocational rehabilitation benefit in the amount of 2 basic pensions of the state social insurance in accordance with the procedure set out by the Government.

5. ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS

After the new Law coming into force, for retirement age persons (hereinafter referred to as persons) the working capacity level is not established. The level of special needs is assessed for such persons and their special needs are met. Municipalities are assigned to establish the level of special needs of the disabled. The level of special needs for these persons is set based on information provided by other services within their competence (e.g. physicians – based on approved disease or condition criteria, it can be established whether there is a special need for constant care or constant supervision (assistance), or the need for purchase of a specialized passenger car and compensation for technical adjustment thereof or compensation of transport expenses) and the special needs identified, interview with the person and scope of the necessary specialized aid means to meet the special needs.

The municipality having assessed the person's special needs makes a decision with regard to assessment and meeting of the person's special needs. Persons upon establishing a high, average or low level of special needs are issued the certificate of a disabled person entitling them to have privileges provided for in the legal acts.

6. STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE PENSIONS

State social insurance pensions for incapacity for work (“disability pensions” until 1 July

2005) is the major type of social security in cases of disability. Pensions for incapacity for work are paid to individuals who, on the day of establishment of the incapacity for work level, have the minimum period for state social insurance for pensions to receive the pension for incapacity for work. The requirements for the minimum and compulsory period of insurance for the pension for incapacity for work depend of the individual's age.

The capacity for work level is not established for individuals who have attained the age for oldage pension. These individuals receive the old-age pension. If an individual was granted and paid the incapacity for work (disability) pension until the day of attaining the age for the old-age pension, when the old-age pension is granted for the first time after 1 July 2005, the period during which the incapacity for work (disability) pension was paid is recognised as the period for state social insurance for pensions.

Pensions are calculated according to same rule as old-age pensions; the years from the day of establishment of the incapacity for work until the retirement age are granted as the insurance years. The full incapacity for work (disability) pension is paid without taking into account whether the recipient works or not.

7. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PENSIONS

Social assistance pensions are paid to people who had not acquired social insurance rights due to different reasons (mainly due to non-participation in labour market): disabled children; individuals recognised as fully or partially incapable for work below the age of 24 (and below 26 in some cases); parents, guardians and caretakers who, at least for 15 years, cared at home for the disabled persons with a special need for constant nursing or care (assistance); mothers who had given birth to and raised five or more children till the age of 8; other persons not listed above who lost their capacity for work.

8. TARGET COMPENSATIONS OF NURSING AND CARE (ASSISTANCE) COSTS

Target compensations of nursing costs are paid to children with severe disabilities; individuals who lost 75–100% of their capacity for work; individuals who have reached the age for the oldage pension. The special need for constant nursing must be established for these individuals.

Target compensations of attendance (assistance) costs are awarded to disabled children and

the persons who are rated as incapable or partially capable of work, have lost 60% and more of their capacity for work as well as the persons who have attained the pensionable age. The special need for constant care (assistance) must be established for these individuals (except for the disabled children).

Target compensations of attendance (assistance) costs are awarded to the persons who have attained the pensionable age for whom the special need for permanent attendance (assistance) has been established already upon attaining the pensionable age, provided they do not draw a bonus in the amount of the state social insurance pension for Group I invalids or 0,5 basic pension designed to meet the special need for permanent nursing or attendance (assistance).

9. ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMMES

Since 2004 the Government has taken efforts to link social assistance benefits to participation in active labour market programmes. These programmes are mainly targeted to the long-term unemployed. Active labour market programmes include skills training, subsidized employment in private firms, job rotation (temporary employment to cover temporary leave of employees), public works, as well as programmes for the disabled (subsidized employment and vocational training). Most funds go to skills training relative to direct-job creation programmes (public works, subsidized employment in private firms). Seeking to integrate the most vulnerable groups of persons into the labour market there have been implemented two main laws – the Law on Employment Promotion and the Law on Social enterprisers.

The Law on Employment promotion provides support for employers when they integrate disabled people into the labour market. Every company can receive state support employing disabled, creating new jobs or adapting the already existing workplaces to the disability of the unemployed person, organising vocational training, employing them after vocational rehabilitation programmes or other vocational programmes and seeking to provide professional skills that they lack directly at the workplace. According the Law disabled is additionally supported in the labour market and they are able to participate in active labour market policy measures: subsidized employment, vocational training, support for the acquisition of professional skills, support for job creation, support for self- employment. Seeking to qualify or to gain the necessary competence, if it is needful for their employment, vocational training is being organised, reimbursing the part of training expenses and travelling expenses to and from the place of training and the accommodation

expenses.

Subsidised employment is being organised for disabled seeking to help them strengthen their positions in the labour market and create special conditions enabling them to remain in the labour market. Employees, who have employed the disabled, are able to receive wage subsidies. Support is also being provided to the employers who are creating new jobs or adapting the already existing workplaces to the disability of the unemployed person and employing unemployed persons under an open-ended contract of employment. The support for job creation is provided by paying the employers a subsidy for the creation of workplace. The employers must also cover a part of the expenses related to the creation (adaptation) of one workplace and maintain one created (adapted) workplace for at least 36 months from the employment of persons sent by local labour exchange offices.

Support for the creation of a workplace is being provided for disabled, whose capacity for work is rated at up to 40% or the disabled for whom severe or moderate disability has been established, who are starting their business, without applying the requirement to cover a part of the expenses related to the creation (adaptation) of workplaces.

A special support for disabled is being determined under the Law on social enterprisers. The aim of the Law is, by employing the persons who are attributed to the target groups indicated in this Law and who have lost their professional and general capacity for work, are economically inactive and are unable to compete in the labour market under equal conditions, to promote the return of these persons to the labour market, their social integration as well as to reduce social exclusion. A social enterprise could be two types – social enterprise or social enterprises of the disabled.

A social enterprise may be granted the State aid of the following types:

1. partial reimbursement of wages and state social insurance contributions;
2. subsidy for the creation of workplaces, adaptation of workplaces to disabled employees and acquisition or adaptation of their work equipment;
3. subsidy for the training of the employees who are attributed to the target groups.

In addition to the types of State aid indicated above, additional State aid of the following types may be provided to a social enterprise of the disabled:

1. subsidy for the adaptation of the work environment of disabled employees, production premises and rest rooms;
2. subsidy for the reimbursement of additional administrative and transport expenses;

3. subsidy for the reimbursement of expenses on an assistant (sign language interpreter).

Nonetheless that the social enterprises could employ not only disabled but also other target groups of the persons (for ex. the long-term unemployed, persons for whom not more than five years are left until the pensionable age and etc.), 99 % of all target groups employed in the social enterprisers are disabled. At the moment 1830 disabled persons are working in the social enterprisers.

10. OTHER MAIN SOCIAL INTEGRATION MEASURES

Technical Aid. Seeking to enforce the rights of and equal opportunities for the disabled in society and ensure their social integration, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour continued to implement the programme for the provision of residents with technical aids. The programme includes not only the supply of technical aids but also their repair. The main responsibility for carrying out these functions lies with the Centre of Technical Aid for Disabled People under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the Centre).

Financial Support to the students with disability. Disabled students received the following financial support:

- for the fulfilment of special needs, a monthly payment of an allowance which equals 50 per cent of the basic state social insurance pension;
- students studying in higher education establishments, whose studies are co-financed or not funded by the state, are paid an allowance amounting to 3.2 of the basic social allowance for every semester to cover part of the studying expenses.

Following the Procedure, financial support may be provided to students with the severe or medium disability or the 45 per cent or lower capacity for work level who study for the first time under a non-university or the 1st or 2nd level integrated university study programme and do not have any academic debts or have not been imposed any disciplinary sanctions.

Housing. Ministry of Social Security and Labour implemented the Programme for the Adaptation of Housing for the Disabled 2007–2011 (hereinafter referred to as the Programme), which aims at creating the conditions for free movement of persons with disability and their active participation in the education and profession acquisition process, the labour market and social life. In 2008, LTL 7,764,100 were allocated from the state budget for the implementation of measures

within the framework of the Programme. Municipalities of 59 cities and districts implemented the Programme.

NGO. According to the National Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled 2003–2012 (hereinafter referred to as the Programme), which is coordinated by the Department of the disabled Affairs, every year a tender for financial support of social integration programmes implemented by associations of the disabled, is called.

In 2008 the tender selected 275 projects coordinated by 27 associations of the disabled (including 256 projects of services for the disabled in a community coordinated by 21 associations of the disabled and carried out by associations of the disabled and their partners (other associations of the disabled, municipal budgetary institutions, non-profit organisations) and 19 projects of supporting the activities of associations of the disabled implemented by 19 associations of the disabled). Over 79,000 persons with disability, of which 31 per cent of persons with a severe disability, took part in and benefited from social integration projects.

Concerning the projects of services for the disabled in a community, the following services were provided according to the type of disability and specificity of problems of persons represented by associations: representation of the rights of the disabled, information and consulting services, organisation and provision of psychological assistance to the disabled and their family members, the activities of increasing independence, regular sports and cultural activities, other social services (information, counselling, transport organisation, socio-cultural services, organisation of personal hygiene and care, assistance at home, accommodation in houses of independent living, social day care, short-term and long-term social care), support for the activities of boosting motivation for the involvement of the disabled in the labour market, search for jobs for the disabled, and services of work assistants for the disabled.

11. CRISIS IMPACT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN LITHUANIA

During last two decades in Lithuania there were many positive changes in social integration of people with disabilities in the areas of public education, health care, access to physical environment, transport and information, employment and culture.

Because of economical crisis introduced general reductions in public expenditures in Lithuania resulted in not only cut of state social insurance pensions for incapacity for work, target

compensations of nursing and care, but greatly diminished budget of the National Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled 2003–2012, resulting in smaller scale of services available for persons with disabilities.

This especially affected people with disabilities who often have low income and are at the greater risk of poverty

In 2013 in Lithuania there were 170 000 people with disabilities of working age and only 28 percent of them work (Employment Programme 2014-2020²). This shows a very low level of employment of people with disabilities in comparison with the rest of population, because the unemployment of general population is about 12 per cent.

Especially the lack of special measures for young people with disabilities, having in mind not only employment possibilities, but also cultural, leisure and etc.

It is essential that temporary reduction in public expenditures and social benefits would be restored to previous level as soon as possible, even the sufficiency of public assistance to people with disabilities is far way not enough.

12. INFORMATIVE SESSIONS ON STRATEGY “EUROPE 2020” IN LITHUANIA

The info sessions on Europe 2020 strategy have been implemented using forum theatre techniques and other non-formal education based activities. Forum Theatre is a part of the Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal with the purpose of stimulating participants to improve oppressive conditions through performances. During the play, the audience and all the participants are invited to stop the performance to suggest a different action for changing the outcome. Actors are supported by a kernel of background knowledge and character definitions. They know very well the issues they are going to represent due to previous contacts with the target group or because they are part of the target group themselves. Everyone contributes to the play, but someone directs the overall process, i. e. the Joker. Once the play has been performed, it belongs to the audience that can intervene and modify it.

In Lithuania, 18 people with disabilities took part in the 6 info sessions that were organised between the 10-th and the 18-th of October, 2013 in Vilnius. The age of participants was between 19 and 30. The group was characterised by gender balance, 8 women and 8 men, and by different

² Employment Programme 2014-2020 (Užimtumo didinimo 2014–2020 metų programa) (Official Gazette, 2013, no. 105-5154)

typologies of disabilities (severe movement, hearing, mental and mixed disabilities). The theatre methodology for young people was considered very interesting, interactive, inclusive, and attractive. The atmosphere was very positive, the more active participants were helping more shy participants or participants with hearing or mental disabilities. Nevertheless, it was a big challenge to explain what the Forum theatre activities for very heterogeneous group was about in such a short period in Lithuania, too. There were young people with different kind of disabilities, e.g. severe movement, hearing, mental, and mixed disabilities. People with more severe disabilities need more assistance to understand the methodology, the tasks, etc., therefore it could be suggested that group of 15 persons should be moderated by two or more moderators. Moreover, it could also be suggested to increase the number of info sessions, since 6 were not enough to understand and get used to the methodology and the topic of discussion.

In the end of the info sessions the participants were asked with the help of the anonymous questionnaire, if Forum Theatre Methodology helped them understand the strategy. Out of 13 respondents who filled in the questionnaire 8 respondents answered that it helped them very much, 2 respondents – good, 2 - satisfactory, and 1 – poor.

General participation was very active and all the attendees were actively involved in the theatrical games and in other activities. Due to their personality, some participants were much more active than others, continuously intervening, commenting, and proposing themselves for the games. Other participants were active only if asked to do something, starting intervening only upon request, but then always gave very interesting and relevant contributions.

From a general perspective, the methodology based on forum theatre proved to be successful because it allowed the discussion of complex topics without tiring the participants. Moreover, it let the participants free to choose and talk about the aspect that were more interesting and useful for them. As it is possible to understand from the short stories reported afterwards, participants actually reflected their real daily life in the theatrical play. They showed, sometimes without realizing it, their struggles and the problems they faced every day in all aspects of their lives.

On the other hand, the theatre methodology was not always successful for an in-depth discussion of the Europe 2020 strategy on its aspect about disability. It was sometimes difficult for them staying concentrated on the same topic, in the same room, for several hours. Moreover, often the atmosphere was very chaotic because of the mix of various kinds of disabilities. As said above,

people with sensor and mental disabilities attended the meetings along with the people with merely motor disability.

13. RESULTS OF INFO SESSIONS

The info session presented the ‘review of the Europe 2020 strategy and people with disabilities’. Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre implementing the info sessions using simplified vocabulary further limiting technical and “bureaucratic” jargon as much as possible and preferring daily words and expressions. This made it easier for the trainer to work on the strategy and on the comprehension by the participants. This process was appreciated by participants in the info session as stressed by one of them in Lithuania:

Language of the strategy: what do you think about it? (content, suggestions)

- It’s good when you [*moderators of Info sessions*] can explain us the things written here [*strategy*], because for the average person with disability (and normal [*meaning person without disability*] also) the language is not accessible. I am the one with higher education, and I also have difficulties to understand all those complicated words, but when I think of people with basic education or people with weak mental capacities, how them to understand? [*speaks about easy to read text*]

Is the Strategy 2020 relevant for everyday life of people with disability ? (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- I think that the strategy will make impact on the education system, so that will make good preconditions for successful integration of young people with disabilities to labour market.
- I suggest that every person with disability would work and that is the way to diminish the risk of isolation.

What are the main challenges and the main suggestions to make education and training more relevant to the needs of young people with disabilities? (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- In many cases its not the person who has disability, but the environment creates a lot of obstacles (there are no adjustments of the buildings etc. that makes him not able to act how he would like to. The obstacles make the person the one with disability, and incapacity itself grows.
- Accessibility – we need that the conditions would be accessible, then people with disability will be more independent. We can, when the environment is friendly.
- The success key to better life is to make people with disability talk. Nothing about disabled without disabled. The participation is the key success factor.
- People with disability need more real possibility to practices their rights in education and participate in all parts of life, European economics and labour market.
- They understand accessibility that the one in a wheelchair can access the building of university. And even then, is only the entrance and accesses to all building levels organized or all the building, including the bathrooms are reachable. But what’s about death? Blind? Complex disability, who almost don’t move, but have excellent intelligence?
- The public transportation and accessibility of living places most of the times are the biggest obstacles.

The knowledge’s of the professors and lecturers in the education about the abilities of people with disabilities and the specific methods of knowledge transfer to the ones, who is blind, deaf etc.

What are the main challenges for people with disabilities in taking advantage of EU grants to study or to be trained in another country? (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- People with disability are afraid and not used to travel. And they can’t travel independently, because still a lot of obstacles (physical) travelling on busses, planes, searching for accessible accommodation.
- Disability certificate is in force only in the country where it was issued. When travelling abroad you cannot expect that you receive all benefits you would get in your home country.

What are the main challenges in the transition from education to work for people with disabilities? (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- Not accessible environment;

- Our society and the employers still has a lot of negative prejudice towards the people with disabilities;
- Sometimes financially is not really pays off to go to work. To receive the social security allowance is much better financially then to go to work, why should I work then?³
- The situation on nowadays labour market is very competitive – a lot of unemployed and not so much new working places. Disabled loose the “battle” in many cases, because they are additional troublemakers for employer.
- The jobs in today’s labour market becomes more multifunctional, and not one task. FOR example the secretary should be the accountant and international relations manager and the one who has and drives her own car to be mobile in the city. For many people with disabilities the multifunctioning is not a chance.
- The practical experience is usually a problem. The one who was a lorry drives and got trauma, so can’t drive a lorry anymore, he went to get new education. But then he has of course no experience on that new field of his knowledge. And then its most new graduates problem, that they have no experience on the field and are not so attractive for employers. AND Then additionally they have disability – too much challenges for companies.
- Many young people are confused, they don’t know what they really want, what to study, in what fields s/he has a talent, young person with disabilities is in the same situation. That’s why s/he needs to gave different challenges, that s/he would have possibilities to know her/himself better.

What are the main obstacles to acquire and develop the mix of knowledge, skills and aptitudes people with disabilities need to succeed in the labour market? (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- The supply and the demand are not equal. The educational programmes are different from the required jobs.
- We need to combine the needs and the dreams. Not everything what disabled wishes should be realised. IT is highly important to assess his needs. Then it is the clear line between reality and dreams. It happens sometimes, that you wish to become someone, whom you will never be, because you have disability.

³ A rather high level of unemployment encourages people to seek for their acknowledgment as disabled, while a state social insurance pension for incapacity to work ensures though minimal, but stable means of subsistence.

- Lots of young people with disabilities are lost, they don't know what they want, what are their abilities, talents, where to study, what kind and what level of abilities they have. They need a chance to try, to experience and learn from experience.

- Yes, people with disabilities must know themselves better.

Its highly important to assess the motivation, to develop, to learn and to experience.

What are the main limits and potentiality in the national social security system? (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- The state says that there is no point in employing disabled, its better they would stay at home. But we can work, we can help by doing something useful.

- To get social security benefits one has to be disabled. But not everyone understands the disability, how difficult is to have disability.

- Disability is like a “stamp” in life.

- The disability sets the conditions for the work. Sometimes they [Disability and Working Capacity Assessment Office] set the maximum amount of an hours per day the person can work. Its not always the disability which cause the amount of the hours the one can work. Ability and disability depends of the kind of work. Person in a wheelchair is fully abled if he is an accountant. So this condition stops sometimes from earning money.

- The salaries are lower then social allowances.

- For the moment I can't work, so I get only social allowances, but they are so low that it is difficult to survive from that.

- If you work, you are not only the “user”.

In our country if you work, they leave you the disability allowances. Disabled are afraid that after employment the percentage of ability to work will grow, what will cause the less disability allowances⁴.

⁴ In Lithuania Disability and Working Capacity Assessment Office is responsible for assessment the percentage of working capacities for adults. DCWO provides the service of assessment of vocational rehabilitation needs for individuals with disabilities according the criteria: working hours that person can work, education, qualification, work experience and work skills, age, and motivation. The need for the person with disabilities is assessed when there are 5 and more favorable or medium favored circumstances from the list of criteria listed above. After the person participates and finishes vocational rehabilitation programme, the percentage of working capacity is reassessed.

Disabilities and life cycle: what are the main challenges and potentialities to reduce the risk of poverty? (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- We need more educational programmes, adjusted for people with disabilities, which has demand on the labour market.
- The motivation of the employers is also important. They need financial and “know how” support to adjust and install working place, reduction of the taxes. The employer wouldn’t be afraid to employ people with disability if they get award.
- Risk of poverty for some people are social security system, for some are work.
- Big bureaucracy and a lot of specialists whom person must visit if he can go etc. to vocational rehabilitation programme⁵.

Every person with disabilities or health problems may work and reduce the risk to be in poverty.

What are the main potentiality and limits in the EU area of actions?

Accessibility: Ensure accessibility to goods, services including public services and assistive devices for people with disabilities. (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- ICT Assistive technologies are very expensive and not funded by the Government;
- Disability passport is not unified in Europe.
- The recognition of disability in different countries are different. So IF I GO to work or to study in foreign country I am highly unsure what kind of support I will get there.

What are the main potentiality and limits in the EU area of actions?

Participation: Achieve full participation of people with disabilities in society by: enabling them to enjoy all the benefits of EU citizenship; removing administrative and attitudinal barriers to full and equal participation; providing quality community-based services, including access to personal assistance. (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- Attitudes of society towards people with disabilities are still bad.

⁵ Vocational rehabilitation programme consist of 4 sequentially running services: assessment of vocational skills, vocational guidance and counselling, restoration of current vocational skills or vocational training to acquire new vocational skills and assistance in a job search. The duration of vocational rehabilitation services may exceed up to one year, but average duration is about 7 months. To receive vocational rehabilitation services, the person must go to Disability and Working Capacity Assessment Office, to the National employment office and only then the person is referred to vocational rehabilitation centre.

- Long history of isolation had impact on low empowerment of people with disabilities. Our self esteem because of prejudice is very low and its hard to make us fully participate in all decision levels.
- If you are sick, why you need education? [rhetorical question] That what is stigma. But in my case I wanted to improve, why should I stop? I wanted and I could finish the secondary school, then I graduated university. I went to university to proof, that I can. Some got to know that I am sick only when some time passed.

What are the main potentiality and limits in the EU area of actions?

Employment : Enable many more people with disabilities to earn their living on the open labor market. (Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- It depends on the kind of disability – some people can work and some can't. But everyone deserve that he would develop at his own level. So not only employment is the solution for all.
- Some of disabled has lost their competences. But they can restore them. For example vocational rehabilitation. That is the way to train work and also all other abilities to enhance the possibility to find a job.
- Open labour market is not ready to accept people with disability.
- The labour market is dependent of education. If education isn't accessible, there is no way to labour market. Some studies are not available and accessible.
- There is a huge problems for those who have disability from childhood, because our mainstream education is very weak for children with disability. And so all the way up to high education. But for those who had trauma being adult, they also face problems to change qualification.
- The variety of jobs people with disability can work is very poor, and educational programmes too.
- The national employment office isn't good mediator for disabled and employer. And people with disability need strong support in finding job. So there has to be more employment agencies and employment managers helping people to find job, to negotiate with employer.
- Many employers see my disability but not my personality.
- There were discussion if the employer should receive benefits from the state for employment of person with disabilities, The following quotations on this topic:

- Different benefits for the employers increase motivation to employ people with disabilities, for example to install a new working place. If the benefits is cancelled there would be only 50 % of the employers left in my opinion.
- It seems that sometimes the employer receives the compensation, but still doesn't employ a person with disabilities.
- I really believe that the benefits are needed, because the employer would be happy to see the motivated employee. And also people with disabilities should be more included into society life.

What are the main potentiality and limits in the EU area of actions?

Health: Foster equal access to health services and related facilities for people with disabilities.

(Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- I know that people with mental health problems experience a lot of problems in accessing the health services. They are treated not well by general practitioners, they don't receive needed help because doctors stop to believe them.
- Yes, and deaf also. They just have communicational problems.

Other topic discussed "What is your opinion about the strategy?"

(Language, relevance to everyday life, content, suggestions)

- The strategy gives more confidence and believe in better future.
- I believe in this strategy.
- The strategy declares equal rights and more opportunities for young people, I like it.

14. CONCLUSIONS

- First of all during the info sessions participants for the first time in their lives had a possibility to get in depth information on EU 2020 Strategy, Youth on the Move and EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020.
- They improved in recognizing their own emotions, understand themselves and reflect in three levels: what do I think (thoughts), what do I feel (emotions and physiology), what do I do (behaviour).

- Participants were significantly improving in group interaction, openness for new experiences.
- Strengthened their positive attitude to employment, to their own disabilities and abilities, to European Union strategies and regulations.
- As the impact of participation in the project activities, the participants were highly motivated to participate in future project activities. For many participants the project “We are able to work 2020” for the first time aroused the feeling that it is possible to travel abroad. Knowing EU 2020 strategy and its priorities, even not being selected to join the youth exchange event, they got a feeling that there many possibilities to travel with the aim develop their own skills and explore the other countries. Several project participants applied for possibility to travel to the study session organized by the Council of Europe Youth Centre in Strasbourg, France. The aim of that study session is to empower young disabled people to tackle multiple discrimination and to develop a video campaign to highlight this issue and promote tolerance and understanding across the Europe.
- After the info sessions about Europe 2020 strategy on its parts on disability, conclusions made by participants are not very positive and hopeful. It is clear that the goals set by the European Union for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are too high and far from being reached in 6 years. The general feeling is that politicians who developed the strategy do not take into account the reality people with disability experience every day, and problems intensified nowadays by the economic crisis. Nevertheless, the full economic and social participation of persons with disability is essential to the EU Europe 2020 Strategy to achieve success in the creation of an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth.

15. INFORMATION ABOUT VALAKUPIAI REHABILITATION CENTRE



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Public Institution Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC), located in Vilnius, Lithuania provides vocational and medical rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) was established legally in 2000. Since 2002 VRC provides vocational and medical rehabilitation for people with severe and moderate physical disabilities in Lithuania. A comprehensive rehabilitation model, standardized methods of assessment and development of vocational skills, innovative (modular) vocational training programs in VRC contribute to the achievement of better employment results of persons with disabilities. Since 2010 VRC has gained a status of national methodological centre for vocational rehabilitation. The organization is actively involved in cooperation with organizations from foreign countries, implementation of international projects in the field of social integration of people with disabilities. VRC is a member of the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR). The quality of services in VRC complies with requirements of international quality certification LST EN ISO 9001:2008 and EQUASS Excellence quality mark.