

" W I T H O U T B A R R I E R S "

A P E R S O N W I T H I N T E L L E C T U A L
D I S A B I L I T Y A T W O R K

I N F O R M A T I O N F O R E M P L O Y E R S



FAMILIES SUPPORTING ASSOCIATION NEW PROSPECTS (NOWE PERSPEKTYWY)

Our mission is to support people in changing their lives for the better by discovering their potential, raising their motivation to act and building up their strength at every stage of life.



WHO ARE WE?

The association was established in October 2012 and received legal status in April 2013. The notion for this local initiative came as the effect of the experiences and conclusions drawn from an international educational project Families and Schools together in European regions which was carried out by Primary School No 17 in Radom, the City Council of Radom and the teachers' training centre RODoN. Several years of the Association's activity led to setting up the first in the local area, specializing in family support, organization - the Family Support and Education Centre, opened in May 2018.

HOW DO WE HELP?

- We provide individual and group support
- We provide therapy sessions
- We organize support groups
- We help in dealing with legal matters
- We build up strength and motivation
- We make people believe that change is possible
- We activate, develop talents, and include beneficiaries in our activities

WHOM DO WE HELP?

- children and youth from foster families
- adoptive families
- victims of violence
- lost, helpless, lonely
- socially excluded
- addicts
- people with emotional problems
- people with mental problems
- people with social disorders
- disabled people and their families
- oncological patients and their families

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TO ERGASTIRI

“To Ergastiri” is a non-profit organisation that aims to assist in the social integration and general wellbeing of adults with intellectual disabilities. Our activities aim to provide quality services and creating new opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities and their families. As well as psychological support, counselling and social integration, support for development of self-image and identity, training, maintenance of family structure and relationships and social consciousness rising.

“To Ergastiri” offers occupational training and integration of those capable and willing to enter the free labour market. Vocational and art training workshops include bakery department, laundry, weaving, carpet making, pottery, batik printing, music, sports and gardening. Learning basic skills in computer use through interactivity offered by new technologies achieved the development of new motor and cognitive skills.

“To Ergastiri” trains and supports 100 adults with intellectual disabilities and their families. Our organisation employs 40 permanent members of staff (technical, administrative, health and supportive staff). Continuous training of our staff takes place through international conferences and seminars and transnational projects focusing on new developments in the field of intellectual disabilities and on contemporary education approaches.

“To Ergastiri” is the first organisation to provide Supported Housing programs for our clients in Greece. Through our program of activities and positive guidance, residents gain important life skills and reach their full potential. We are active in various fields both nationally and on European level, we actively seek participation in projects in the arts, sports and best practices that we can use to benefit our clients.

We are focused on initiatives on active ageing for disabled people and we consider our organisation to be in the forefront in developing methodologies to further improve the quality of life of our beneficiaries and their families.

“To Ergastiri” is a pioneer in the inclusion of assistive technologies in a supported living environment.



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INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

CHARACTERISTICS of intellectual disability

According to various studies, intellectual disability occurs in 1-3% of the population. In Poland, the popular term used to refer to intellectual disability is 'mental retardation'. Due to the global standards created in the last decade for a number of disabilities, it should be emphasized that the current terminology to be used is the terminology with disability to separate the trait of disability from the person who has it. Thus, it is a subjective and respectful approach to a person facing a problem.

Fig. 1. Subjective and stigmatizing terminology for a person with intellectual disability

Source: compiled own, K. Nowak, 2019

SUBJECTIVE APPROACH	STIGMATIZATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• person with intellectual disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mentally retarded person• mentally underdeveloped person• mentally slow• past terminology: shallowness, imbecility, idiocy

According to the latest classification of mental health disorders of the American Psychiatric Association DSM-V (2015), the definition of intellectual disability indicates that it is a disorder that begins in the development period and includes deficits in intellectual, adaptive, social and practical functioning. This concept is universal for the language of medicine, as well as in the area of social and legal activities.

THE KEY FACTORS OF INTELLECTUAL

- it is a statistically significant reduction in the overall intelligence quotient compared to the average (IQ <70)
- applies not only to the intellect, but to all spheres of development: emotions, socialization, motor skills and others.
- it is a STATE not a DISEASE (!)
- it is not a homogeneous group of disorders of various aetiology, clinical picture and course

Dig. 2. Features of intellectual disability. Source: compiled own,



Intellectual disability is a STATE with which a person must learn to live, it is not a disease, so it WILL NOT RETREAT after a specific treatment. However, people with intellectual disabilities - like everyone else - can develop their potential, at least to some extent. Intellectual disability is associated with the co-existence of deficits or impairment of adaptability in at least two of the following areas:

communication
social/interpersonal competences
health
self-sufficiency
using public infrastructure
work
safety
independent living
decisiveness
free time

ORIGIN of intellectual disability

Determinants of intellectual disability are usually multifactorial, but the deeper it is, the more biological factors are accountable (damage to the central nervous system). In cases of mild intellectual disability, it is worth mentioning the problem of the impact of environmental neglect and the role of social factors.

In terms of duration of the damaging factor, the factors causing intellectual disability can be distinguished as

follows:

before conception / genetic /

during period of foetal

related to delivery

after birth

In terms of the type of damaging factor, the causes of disability include the following:

genetic factors

biological factors

external environment factors

social environment factors

(extreme psychological and social deprivation)

Intellectual disability
WHEREAS OTHER HEALTH
DISORDERS. Intellectual
disability usually coexists
with a number of physical
and mental health disorders.
Below are the most
common ones.

Intellectual disability

Visual disability

Hearing disability

Physical disability

Epilepsy

Mental disorders

Neurodevelopmental disorders (autism)

Chronic somatic diseases

Aggression and self-aggression comorbidity

Dig. 3. Relationship of intellectual disability with other health disorders
Source: compiled own, K. Nowak, 2019

DEGREES OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Intellectual disability is diagnosed according to four levels: 'mild', 'moderate', 'significant' and 'severe'. It is estimated that in the group of people with intellectual disabilities - a mild degree occurs in 80%, moderate in 12%, significant in 7%, and severe in 1% of cases

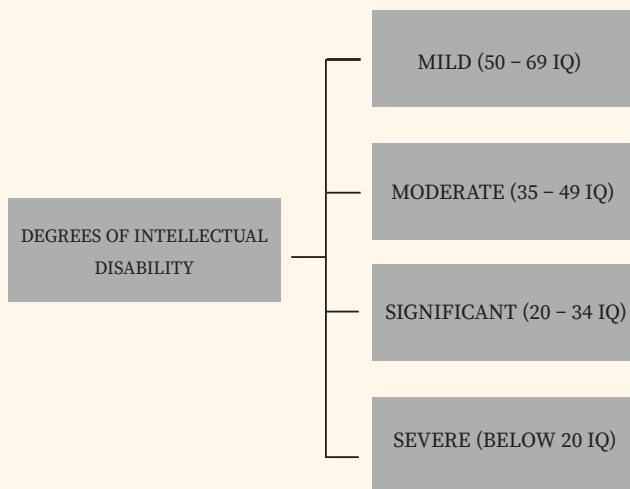


Fig. 4. Degrees of intellectual disability. Source: compiled own, K. Nowak, 2019

MILD DEGREE OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IS CHARACTERIZED BY:

- complete independence in self-sufficiency (eating, washing, dressing, sphincter control)
- independence in practical home tasks
- basic literacy
- basic ability to use money
- ability to care for others
- the ability to adapt to social requirements important for independent functioning
- time and space orientation
- potential capacity to work requiring rather practical skills
- delayed speech development and speech impediments are common, the vocabulary is low
- difficulties in reasoning and concluding
- problems with writing and reading
- slow learning pace
- in case of increased social and economic stress, a person needs the help of others
- emotional instability, impulsiveness and other restrictions to control one's behaviour
- disturbed assessment of own capabilities
- lower responsibility

MODERATE DEGREE OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IS CHARACTERIZED BY:

- limited reading and writing skills (the skills require constant maintenance)
- basic personal resourcefulness (e.g. preparation of simple meals, the ability to clean and wash dishes, washing, doing small shopping, moving around the city independently, especially in areas and routes previously known and using public transport, using the telephone, etc.)
- basic orientation in calendar and clock
- difficulty in using money
- reduced perception efficiency
- difficulty concentrating

- very slow learning pace
- poorly developed thinking
- lack of self-control capability
- ability to perform simple vocational activities, individuals can work under supervision in safeguarded worksites, they are generally very conscientious and dutiful, they need contacts with others, exchanging of information, common activities, they also have a well-developed need for respect, the vast majority of them are sensitive for the needs of others and ready to help even at their own expense
- an individual is usually unable to live independently

SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IS CHARACTERIZED BY:

- clinical similarity to a moderate degree, BUT:
- significantly lower levels of the above characteristics
- frequent coexistence of locomotive apparatus damage and other neurological deficits
- requires supervision and a controlled environment

SEVERE DEGREE OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IS CHARACTERIZED BY:

- serious difficulties in understanding and following instructions
- lack of the ability to take care of their own basic needs
- the need for constant assistance and supervision
- large neurological and physical deficits

The table below presents the main difficulties that can occur in particular areas in the functioning of a person with intellectual disability (Table 1).

AREA	DIFFICULTIES
COGNITIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slow and inaccurate perception process • poor concentration and attention span • dominance of involuntary attention • dominance of short-term, mainly mechanical, memory • prevalence of concrete - pictorial thinking • inability to perform complex logical operations • difficulties in creating abstract concepts
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbal: frequent speech disorders, poor vocabulary, simple two-word sentences, echolalia • non-verbal: often incomprehensible gestures, facial expressions with simultaneous vocalization • in verbal communication with an intellectually disabled person one should avoid statements that are too complex, containing abstract concepts, spatial and temporal reference
SENSORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disturbances in the functioning of the senses and the field of impressions reception sensory hypersensitivity • sensory insensitivity
EMOTIONAL AND MOTIVATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor emotions and drives control • frequent misbehaving
SOCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulties in functioning in problematic interpersonal situations • disorganization in stressful situations

It is worth highlighting the capacities of people with MILD degree of disability. Although their intellectual achievements are limited, the richness of psychological needs, the ability to express themselves, their social personalities, as well as the range of practical skills and autonomy in their performance - are sometimes, taking into account their capabilities, considerable. Thus, the sad stereotype of the 'handicapped' is unfortunately the key reason for neglect in satisfying the needs of this group of people, and thus - giving them a chance to live a normal life. The importance of their sensitivity to beauty, cultural and creative needs are often underestimated. And the latter ones are especially vivid and rich. These people are frequently the hard core of

music bands, drama groups and others. Adults with a mild degree of intellectual disability are able to live with a large dose of independence in small friendly groups, with partner assistance rather than care. In stable and tolerant societies, with well-developed health care, education and a support network, most people will not stand out in local communities.

DIFFICULTIES RELATED TO VOCATIONAL CAPACITIES OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The shift towards a human rights approach has been explicitly approved by the United Nations in a resolution of the General Assembly of 1993 'Standard principles for equal opportunities for people with disabilities'. Such thinking was confirmed by the European Commission in its 1997 Bulletin on 'Equal opportunities for people with disabilities - a new common disability strategy'. In Poland, in 1997, the Parliament adopted a resolution on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which also focuses not on disability itself, but on the rights of persons with disabilities. The Principles of Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities, the EU Disability Strategy and the Charter of the Rights of People with Disabilities emphasize the basic idea of identifying and removing various barriers that make it difficult for disabled people to achieve equal opportunities and full participation in all areas of social life. It is vital to be aware of these changes in an attitude towards disability when considering the extremely difficult problem of the presence of people with disabilities on the labour market.

The issue of employing people with intellectual disabilities affects,
among others, stereotypes prevailing about them.

STEREOTYPES ABOUT THE WORK OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

INABILITY TO WORK MODEL	READINESS FOR WORK MODEL
people with intellectual disabilities are not capable of working	people with intellectual disabilities are not ready to work; readiness is just a theoretical

Fig. 5. Beliefs about the work of people with intellectual disabilities

Source: compiled K. Nowak based on E. Wapiennik 2006

An important goal is to maximise the number of people with intellectual disabilities find employment on the open labour market. Supported employment is of particular importance here. It is also worth changing the way of thinking about employing such people (see Dig. 6).



Dig. 6. Beliefs about the work of people with intellectual disabilities

Source: compiled K. Nowak based on E. Wapiennik 2006

In the modern approach, the employment of a disabled person is the first step in the process of seeking a job, which is later followed by training the employee and teaching them how to perform a specific job on a specific position.

WORK AND EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

The main problem in employing people with intellectual disabilities is their difficulty in understanding and learning using memory and logical thinking in all aspects of human functioning. This does not mean, however, that these people should give up their vocational aspirations. People with intellectual disabilities have the capacity to work and they do work in the open labour market. Finding suitable jobs, i.e. matching tasks to the skills possessed, they stand a chance of permanent employment. Certainly it is difficult to indicate the best and specific professions for them. These people, however, will prove themselves in performing auxiliary and cleaning, not very complicated, jobs related to the following:

- sorting, packaging, assembling the whole from elements,
- labelling and cleaning of rubber and plastic casts,
- simple office work, e.g. photocopying, binding, enveloping, document shredding,
- simple printing, gardening and minor maintenance jobs,
- auxiliary and cleaning jobs in carpentry, gastronomy, processing, breeding, floriculture, vegetable growing (these jobs, however, are usually performed in vocational activation sites and safeguarded worksites).

Before employing a person with intellectual disability, employers should remember that these people

- Usually do not act on their own initiative, but try to shadow others.
- In solving problems they cannot use their own experience, but use the method of trial and error.
- They lack planning and independence while operating.
- Their actions are frequently influenced by their mood, and they do not accurately predict the consequences of own decisions.
- People with mild intellectual disability are independent and socially resourceful, but they should not perform jobs that require making decisions because they have no sufficiently developed cognitive sphere with which

Moreover, the employer employing a person with intellectual disability should properly prepare such a person to the working environment of the workplace:

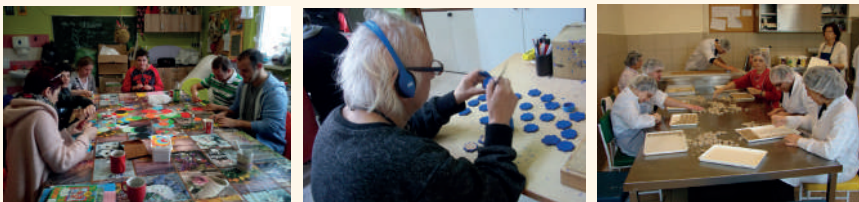
1. First of all, co-workers need to be prepared to accept a disabled colleague.
2. The best thing, at the beginning of employment, would be to provide support of a qualified person, for instance, an assistant, a job trainer or just another colleague.
3. At the workplace, a disabled person should be assigned clearly defined tasks to perform.
4. An individual ought to be provided with clear brief regarding subordination, responsibilities and working time.
5. An individual should be trained with solving problem procedures.

VOCATIONAL COUNSELING OF INTELLECTUAL DISABLED PEOPLE

The feeling of being needed, socially useful through performing work is a matter of concern for everyone. People with disabilities also have their own needs, more and more often they want to develop themselves and pursue their plans. However, their limitations and difficulties resulting from their disability mean that they are unable to realize their dreams of being an active player on the labour market. The general definition of career counselling defines it as a process of helping people achieve a better understanding of themselves regarding the type of work and working environment, as well as regarding the choice of the suitable profession (field of study) or the change of employment and proper vocational adjustment.

Most job seekers face the problem of insufficient professional qualifications, lack or poor motivation or low self-esteem. Among people with intellectual disabilities, these restrictions are even more difficult to overcome due to the personal qualities resulting from the disability itself. People with intellectual disabilities find it difficult to realise what vocational capacities they have and how far they can reach at work in the future. They do not have enough experience, they do not know how and where to look for it and they do not have an easy access to information due to limited spatial mobility. Here appears some room for a career counsellor, whose task, taking into account all the difficulties and restrictions arising from disability, is to:

- assess professional capacity
- help choose a suitable profession
- help choose the right job (in case of people with intellectual disabilities, it is not choosing a specific profession, but realistic assessment of the capacity of performing specific vocational activities in a particular profession)
- facilitate assessment of one's capabilities and predispositions
- help in better understanding of the labour market
- help reduce anxiety faced by people with disabilities, caused by fear of entering unknown vocational environment and mixing with non-disabled persons.



Vocational counsellors are supposed to be well familiar with the local and national labour market. They should also know the regulations concerning the employment of disabled people and their vocational rehabilitation. Whenever it is necessary, they ought to cooperate with other specialists, e.g. a physiotherapist or a psychiatrist.

Employers can also make the best of the help of a vocational counsellor, who can participate in a recruitment process, starting from determining the psychophysical features necessary to do a specific job, to assisting in searching for suitable job candidates. A vocational counsellor will help determine the appropriate conditions in which a disabled person may perform specific professional activities, depending on the type of their disability, e.g.: PEOPLE WITH MENTAL DISFUNCTION should work only when the job does not disturb the employee's day and night rhythm and the principle of equal treatment of employees is obeyed. People with disabilities should be clearly informed and given unambiguous instructions regarding the tasks they undertake. PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY, who have been approved by a specialist, should be assigned selected job positions, in a team and under supervision. Work should be calm, stress-free so that the risk of seizures could be minimized.

Free of charge career counselling services are available at poviats labour offices as well as career planning centres at voivodeship labour offices. Many forms of career counselling are provided by non-governmental organizations working for the benefit of the disabled. Every year, PFRON finances projects in which organizations help recognize professional potential of individuals and help find suitable employment. The list of projects that are co-financed by the Fund is always available on the PFRON website.

EMPLOYMENT OF A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY - PRACTICALITY

REALITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN POLAND

Work is a kind of value for everyone, an opportunity to develop and meet many important needs. Not only does it provide financial benefits, but also enables contacts with the environment, forming relationships and making friends. In Poland there is a clear tendency for people with disabilities to be in a less advantageous position on the labour market, since, in most cases, they have low professional qualifications. Most people with intellectual disabilities do not continue their education after leaving school. They do not learn any more, nor they work. Unfortunately, few people with disabilities believe that they can find a job. Sometimes their families do not believe it either. Another issue is the fear that once they get a job, their social benefits will be stopped.

FUNCTIONING OF A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AFTER FINISHING EDUCATION

Many people with intellectual disabilities prepare for professional work in vocational therapy workshops. Workshop participants acquire various skills needed in life or at work, for example, gardening, carpentry, dressmaking or cooking. They are also taught some other practical skills. They learn how to move around by bus or tram on their own. They go to the theatre, cinema and cafe and try to understand how to behave there. They learn how to talk on the phone, settle important legal matters. They talk about the problems they face with their instructors. People who need more support and help can get them at local community self-help centres. However, because there are not many such centres, sometimes they have to wait long to get admitted. The centres provide classes in various areas, such as household skills, art, pottery, carpentry, IT and many others. Participants have access to rehabilitation sessions, they play instruments and sing. They go on field trips and take part in interesting events. The prime goal of such self-help centres is to provide their participants with the possibility of spending time actively.

PROFESSIONAL WORK OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Getting a job, for people with intellectual disability, means an improvement in living conditions, but what is even more important, it means a boost in self-esteem. Employment is also an opportunity to develop personality and establish interpersonal relations. Having a job then, plays a key role as an element preventing social exclusion. Work must be learned. In Poland, however, there are very few professional trainings tailored to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. It is poviats labour offices which are responsible for organizing them. Unfortunately, the people working there do not know how to organize such trainings. Little knowledge do they have about real needs of people with intellectual disabilities. Sometimes vocational trainings are organized by non-government associations and foundations. In case of people with intellectual disabilities, it is work motivation that is believed to be the key factor when it comes to assessing their professional suitability. Depending on individual capacities, a person with intellectual disabilities may be employed in a protected, supported or open labour market.

THE REALITIES OF EMPLOYING A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY FACED BY EMPLOYERS AND THE WORKPLACE ADAPTATION

Adaptation of the workplace should compensate for the limitations of a disabled employee. In the case of this type of people, the adaptation of the workplace will primarily involve matching tasks assignment to the capacities of a particular individual and providing support in the workplace in the form of an assistant (job coach, assistant or trained colleague). Employment of an intellectually disabled person imposes additional obligations on the employer and coworkers and adopting by them a supportive attitude. Adapting the workplace also involves preparing other employees to cooperate with a disabled colleague. A disabled person should feel safe and accepted in the workplace. It could be achieved by training the employees in a particular worksite. This includes teaching the staff the specifics of intellectual disability and the difficulties the disabled face in their everyday functioning. Not all employers are capable of meeting the challenge of working with a disabled person. What they need, apart from kindness, is expertise about the nature of the disability and the capacities and limitations associated with it. An intellectually disabled employee should be assigned specific tasks at the workplace. They should be given clear instructions about their subordination, range of activities, working hours and how to deal with problems that may arise. For people with intellectual disabilities, the most appropriate seem to be auxiliary or cleaning, not very complicated, jobs. They are more likely to find employment in vocational workshops and protected worksites.

NORMATIVE GROUNDS FOR EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN POLISH LAW

The hierarchy of legal acts relevant to employment of people with disabilities in Poland in accordance with Article 87 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland.

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997, Journal Of Laws of 1997 No. 78, item 483 as amended
2. Convention No. 159 of the International Labour Organization, concerning vocational rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities, (Geneva) of June 20, 1983, Journal Of Laws of 2005 No. 43, item 412.
3. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of December 13, 2006, Journal Of Laws of 2012, item 1169 as amended
4. Labour Code of June 26, 1974, i.e. of May 16, 2019, Journal Of Laws of 2019, item 1040.
5. The Act on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons of 27 August 1997, i.e. 16 May 2019. Dz. Of Laws of 2019, item 1172 as amended .
6. Resolution of the Parliament of the Republic of Poland. Charter on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of August 1, 1997, M.P. of 1997 No. 50, item 475.

The legal regulations mentioned above make it clear that the employment of disabled people is the subject of both national and international normative acts.

According to art. 69 of the Polish Constitution, "in accordance with the Act, public authorities provide assistance to persons with disabilities in securing their existence, being admitted to work and social communication." For people with intellectual or mental disabilities, an important act is also Article 41 section 1 of the Polish Constitution. According to its wording, deprivation of liberty may occur only on the terms and in the manner specified in the Act. The fact of deprivation of liberty should be notified to the family or a person designated by the deprived of liberty (Article 41 (2)). Particularly important for persons deprived of their liberty with intellectual or mental disability also gaining articulated in art. 41 section 3 an order to inform in an understandable manner the reasons for detention. These people may have difficulty understanding the reasons for detention and the measures taken against them. Therefore, it may take more time to explain to them - in a way they understand - why they are deprived of their liberty. Equally important is the obligation to treat all persons deprived of liberty in a humane manner, as expressed in art. 41 section 4 of the Polish Constitution. Humanitarian treatment is a such which require taking into account and respecting certain minimum needs of each person, referring them to the average standards of a given society. Pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, "States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with other persons, including the right to earn a living by doing freely chosen or accepted job on the labour market, and in inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities work environment. States Parties shall protect and promote the implementation of the right to work, including the cases in which people become disabled during employment, by taking appropriate measures, including legislative ones ...

As part of its regulation, this Act implements Directive 2000/78 / EC of November 27, 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (Official Journal EC L 303 of December 2, 2000).

NO LEGAL DEFINITION OF THE TERM "DISABLED WORKER"

The Polish legal system lacks a legal definition of the term "disabled worker". Labour Code, specifying the rights and obligations of employees and employers (Article 1) does not contain a separate definition of a disabled worker. Due to this fact, the definition of "employee with disabilities" is of key importance in the definition of employee in art. 2 of the Labour Code. In accordance with this provision, an employee is a person employed under an employment contract, appointment, selection or cooperative employment contract. Consequently, people with disabilities, on the labour market, are subject to the same rules as any other person.

THE SCOPE OF THE ACT ON VOCATIONAL AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

The Act on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people is of fundamental importance in the employment of disabled people. In compliance with art. 1 of this Act, it applies to persons whose disability has been confirmed by:

- 1) decision to qualify an individual, by the adjudicating entities, to one of the three degrees of disability specified in art. 3 or
- 2) decision stating total or partial inability to work, pursuant to separate provisions, or
- 3) decision stating disability, issued before the age of 16
- hereinafter referred to as "disabled people".

Art. 3 of the Act on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people defines three degrees of disability - significant, moderate, mild. Determining the degree of disability is regulated in art. 4 of the Act on professional and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people.

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SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS OF EMPLOYERS EMPLOYING DISABLED

Issues regarding the entitlements of employers (see M. Włodarczyk 2015) employing people with disabilities are regulated in detail in Chapter V of the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled people (Articles 21 - 27). These include:

- reimbursement of additional costs for a person employing a disabled person (Article 26 of the Act);
- monthly co-financing for the disabled employee's remuneration (Article 26a of the Act);
- reimbursement of the costs of employment or training of disabled workers (Article 26d of the Act)
- reimbursement of costs of workplace equipment (Article 26e of the Act);

Employers employing people with disabilities can therefore receive, among others benefits, co-financing for salaries of disabled employees. In addition, they can receive funding for the adaptation of work stations for the disabled.

Pursuant to the Resolution of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, the Charter of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, disabled persons, i.e. persons whose physical, mental or mental fitness permanently or periodically impedes, limits or prevents daily life, education, work and social roles in accordance with legal and customary norms, persons have the right to an independent and active life and may not be subject to discrimination. According to the resolution, disabled people have the right in particular to access to goods and services enabling full participation in society, access to treatment and medical care, early diagnosis and rehabilitation and medical education, as well as for health services taking into account the type and degree of disability, including the supply of orthopaedic items, auxiliaries, rehabilitation equipment, access to comprehensive rehabilitation aimed at social adaptation, education in schools together with their able-bodied peers, as well as to use special education or individual education, psychological, pedagogical and other specialist assistance enabling the development, acquisition or improvement of general and professional qualifications, employment on the open labour market according to qualifications, education and possibilities as well as benefits, professional counselling and brokerage, and when disability and health require it - the right to work in conditions adapted to the needs of the disabled. Entities supporting the employment of people with disabilities. State Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled - a public administration body supporting the employment of disabled people.

	NEW SKILLS - NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFE PROJECT EXCHANGE OF POLISH - GREEK EXPERIENCES
	<p>NEW SKILLS-NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFE PROJECT was carried out between 01/06/2019 and 30/11/2019. The main goal of the grant project was to work together with a Greek partner to develop a new approach to increase access to employment for people with intellectual disabilities who, through social and professional exclusion, find themselves at a disadvantageous position on the labour market. The result of the transnational cooperation undertaken is the manual that will be a form of guidance for employers how to understand the issues related to employing a person with disabilities. The target group were entrepreneurs / employers - private companies and state organizations. Indirect support was provided to people with disabilities, individuals facing difficulty finding a job as well as to people socially excluded and socially vulnerable. The solution developed under the project increased employment of people with disabilities. Employers learned about the benefits of employing the disabled and they overcame a stereotypical perception of disabled people as unable to work. The booklet (Polish and English) developed by the project partners and published in a bilingual version will constitute the main result of the New skills - new opportunities for life project. The publication contains both a description of the functioning of a person with intellectual disability, as well as the main aspects in the recruitment and employment of an intellectually disabled person. The project consisted of one working visit to a transnational partner and two study visits (1 in Greece and 1 in Poland). The working visit was primarily aimed at getting to know the Project Leader with the foreign Project Partner, the socio-political and economic conditions of Greece, and the specificity of the organization represented by the Partner. A working visit is one of the basic elements of cooperation that determines the further outcome of a project. It makes it possible for both parties to clarify and unify the project assumptions and objectives, as well as choose common methods and forms of work during the implementation of single tasks in a project. The project culminated in a seminar aimed at the activation of employers and people with intellectual disabilities. During the seminar, a publication prepared and published as part of the implementation of the project was presented, which is a form of guidance</p>

for all those who do not know the specifics of the functioning of people with intellectual disabilities and are afraid of getting involved in cooperating with them due to stereotypes prevailing in society. The issues of increasing the employment of people with intellectual disabilities and their professional activation were raised. During the seminar, lectures and discussion panels were led by many years of practitioners, people in charge of companies who have been dealing with the issues of intellectual disability for years, especially issues related to their inclusion on the labour market and issues of their self-reliance. The seminar was also an opportunity to get in touch with companies, enterprises and organizations that face the problem of workforce shortage. Inclusion of intellectually disabled people could be an alternative to resolve the problem. Yet another goal of the seminar was also to enable disabled people to meet directly with employers and to provide them with access to participate in activities that might increase their chance of finding a suitable job or internship.



The conclusions regarding the employment of people with intellectual disabilities were presented during the final seminar, summing up the exchange of Polish-Greek experiences. They covered three main areas: difficulties, opportunities and supported employment. The outcome is presented below.

PERSON WITH DISABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations in successful communication – people with intellectual disabilities are often incomprehensible and misunderstood due to speech impediments • Underdevelopment of social skills (including low self-esteem, lack of assertiveness, difficulty controlling emotions, etc.)
EMPLOYER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in delegating tasks to a disabled person, so that they would be able to perform them properly and would not bring financial losses • Insufficient financial support for employing people with disabilities • Commuting problems – no system solution to support people with intellectual disabilities in daily commute to a workplace in Poland (in Greece people with disabilities either use specially dedicated transport, or are trained by a job coach how to use public transport; employers do not provide transport assistance)
SOCIETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults with intellectual disabilities are treated as children • Irrational fear of people with disabilities • Inability to understand the intentions, emotions or verbal expression of people with disabilities, as well as not being patient enough when dealing with them • Societies lack the experience and expertise how to deal with people with intellectual disabilities • Parents of people with intellectual disabilities tend to be overprotective. They should withdraw and give them more room for independence and teach them how to be self-reliant.
<p>Occupational development of people with intellectual disabilities</p> <p>1. Prior labour market research is necessary, the needs of companies ought to be analysed and particular occupations should be selected.</p> <p>2. Most suitable jobs involve simple tasks, such as. placing goods in supermarkets, auxiliary administrative jobs, gardening, simple cooking jobs.</p>	

3. The employer is required to:

- be familiar with the type of disability
- be aware of the risks and benefits arising from employing people with intellectual disabilities
- provide necessary training for all the co-workers of an employee with a disability, appoint a 'guardian' or employ a job coach to assist a person with disabilities, provide a guided tour of the workplace, introduce them to their colleagues, and familiarise them with their work position, which should always be adapted to particular disabilities.

5. It is essential that employers cooperate with training organizations in order to increase the awareness of working capacities of people with intellectual disabilities

6. Sheltered employment conditions appropriate to the type of disability need to be provided, as well as the strengths of disabled people should be recognised.

Factors that could contribute to the increase of the employment of people with intellectual disabilities in the open labour market

- A trained assistant in the workplace – a job coach
- Providing training for the people cooperating with people with disabilities
- Providing training for the local officials on how to communicate successfully and assist people with intellectual disabilities
- Creating opportunities for employers to exchange experiences and develop mutual cooperation
- Providing professional support for the parents of people with disabilities and employers dealing with them
- Running workshops developing emotional and social competences for co-workers of people with disabilities
- Creating a professional profile of a person with intellectual disability in order to establish the strengths and interests of an individual, and using the findings in a job-seeking process later on
- Legal and taxable back-up for people with intellectual disabilities
- Removing architectural and transportation barriers so that people with intellectual disabilities were able to move around freely
- Increasing financial benefits for employers employing people with intellectual disabilities
- Educating societies on different aspects of disabilities



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