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## **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT OF PWD: A CASE STUDY OF BOKA KOTORSKA (MONTENEGRO)**

### **Abstract**

This paper presents an overview of a research study on the position of persons with disabilities (PWD) in the labour market of the Boka Kotorska region, in the municipalities of Tivat, Kotor and Herceg Novi. This original research study is based on an analysis of the perception and attitudes of PWD regarding their position in the labour market. The study looks into the attitudes of PWD towards: education, employment, motivation to engage in employment, and the challenges they face in seeking employment in the region of Boka Kotorska. Simultaneously, it tested the impact of the different forms and types of disability, as well as age on potential employment. Data on unemployment of PWD in Boka Kotorska, combined with the activities and capacities of employers in the area of employment of PWD were analysed. The research findings indicate certain internal and external barriers in the labour market. PWD mostly face the following problems: difficulties with obtaining employment, lack of recognition of their potential, prejudice on behalf of employers regarding their skills and capacities, early abandonment of education, and physical barriers. A certain number

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of PWD faces limitations primarily related to low levels of motivation to: engage in employment, actively seek employment, engage in professional rehabilitation programmes, advance in education, self-employ. However, a majority of PWD wish to engage in some form of employment, in areas that are adapted to their capacities, and with modified working hours.

**Keywords:** PWD, disability, employment, labour market, unemployment

## INTRODUCTION

The social position of persons with disabilities (PWD) has changed dramatically in the past couple of decades in terms of their de-institutionalisation, inclusion into regular education, and approximation to the labour market (Pearson, Watson, 2007:95). However, societies are still far from enabling complete social integration and equal participation of PWD. Employment among PWD is still significantly lower than among persons without disabilities. Employment rates in Europe are, on average, 20% to 30% lower among PWD. In the UK, for example, employment rates for persons without disabilities is at 80.1%, compared to 47% for PWD (Van Dallen, 2017:7). In Central and Eastern European countries (Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia), the gap in employment rates for PWD and persons without disabilities is far more pronounced than in Western European and Scandinavian countries (Luxemburg, France, Finland, Sweden).<sup>1</sup> According to the Croatian Employment Agency, a total of 5.948 PWD are registered as unemployed, making for 4.5% of the total unemployed population (CEA, 2019). In Serbia, 2.7% of the total number of people registered as unemployed at the National Employment Service are PWD (Cvejić, Stefanović, 2016:11). Due to evident gaps in the rates of employment and the fact that PWD do not have equal access to the labour market, unemployment among PWD is sometimes referred to as the “disability penalty” (McInnes, 2014:36).

1 See: Tursa, A., et al. 2018. Study on employment models within the social economy and their role in including PWD into the labour market and society, Policy Impact LabEuropean Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation “eASI” (2014-2020).

A significant number of PWD do not consider themselves “disabled”, and indeed, changes in circumstances and the unpredictability that frequently characterises the type disability they are faced with can lead to a positive change in perception among those who consider themselves “disabled” (UKDWP, 2013). A common trait among PWD, regardless of the type of disability they suffer, their lifestyle, work ability and motivation, is the fact that they deal limitations or restrictions in their everyday life. The World Health Organisation differentiates between the following three elements or problems that *constitute* a disability: problems with body functions, activity limitation problems, and social participation restriction problems, stereotyped as a “handicap” (WHO, 2000). The term “handicap” has been replaced by a concept of a social model of disability. The social model places a disability in the context of social norms and expectations that shape experiences of PWD (Spiker, 2013:97). The emergence of the so-called social model of disability resulted in treatment of PWD as active and equal members of the population, for whom the society is obliged to remove barriers and ensure provision of support in social inclusion efforts (Leutar, 2016:2). The model is based on a premise that the position of PWD and the discrimination they are exposed to are socially conditioned (Rieser, 1994, cited in Teodorović and Bratković, 2001:282). Edwards observes that both models (medical and social) were formulated in a context of a disadvantaged position induced by social factors (Edwards, 2005:20). A variety of activities can be undertaken as a proactive reaction or response to the problems faced by PWD. Medical treatment can facilitate overcoming functional limitations. Social services can contribute to overcoming barriers resulting from any existing limitation. Intensive efforts invested in changing social relations and processes can contribute to creating an ambience that enables social inclusion of PWD into everyday social life (the labour market, civic activism, volunteering, humanitarian activities, etc.). The specificities of the position of PWD determine their potential to face their problems. In order to meet their needs in an adequate manner, recognition or acknowledgement of a problem must be combined with appropriate responses to the said problem. Modern societies take their fair share of responsibility in enabling PWD to live active lives.

Consequently, PWD are no longer perceived as passive recipients of assistance, but as equal active citizens (Ostojić-Baus, 2018:50).

The position of PWD in Montenegro's labour market has long been a subject of interest of policy makers and civil society activists. Montenegro has recently created the required legislative and normative framework that recognises and treats the position of PWD.<sup>2</sup> The Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of PWD is particularly relevant for matters related to employment of PWD. The law defines standards for professional rehabilitation and recognises the following two types of employment of PWD: jobs that require adaptation, and jobs that do not require adaptation. The first strategic document that deals with the social position of PWD in Montenegro was adopted 12 years ago (Strategy for Inclusion of PWD in Montenegro, 2008-2016). Recently, awareness raising has been carried out on the need to transform the medical model into a more modern and proactive social model that relies on maximising participation in all spheres of social life. The *Strategy for Integration of PWD in Montenegro, 2016-2020* defines measures and instruments that aim to improve the position of PWD in the sphere of employment, among other areas.<sup>3</sup> A broad spectrum of models for integrated employment of PWD (quota, volunteering and mixed employment systems, supported and adapted employment, self-employment, social entrepreneurship) enables practicing the right to employment (Milovanović-Dobrota, 2018:91). Consequently, policy makers in Montenegro spotted and identified a number of challenges and risks that PWD deal with as problems that affect the public as a whole, and as issues to be dealt with through state-level interventions. Intensive work in the area of defining adequate strategic approaches and implementing associated action plans for employment of PWD remains ineffective in terms of final outcomes. There is substantial room for improvement with regards to the position of PWD in the labour market, particularly in terms

2 Law on Prohibition of Discrimination of PWD; Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of PWD; Law on the Movement of PWD with a Guide Dog; Law on Travel Privileges of PWD; Law on Education of Children with Special Needs.

3 One of the four objectives of the strategy aims at "providing conditions for full and active participation of PWD in all fields of social life on an equal basis through the development and implementation of the policy of equal opportunities, particularly in the fields of employment, labour, education, culture and housing" (Strategy for Integration of PWD in Montenegro, 2016-2020)

of gaining and developing their competencies, and in the area of actual employment. The research study presented in this paper explores the impact of internal and external barriers on access to the labour market and employment in Boka Kotorska, through an analysis of attitudes of PWD.

The first part of the paper provides for a theoretical overview of matters related to employment of PWD. The second part is dedicated to the objectives of the research, the research questions, and the methodology applied to the sample. Research findings are presented in the third part of the paper. We present a general conclusion on the current position of PWD in Boka Kotorska at the end of the paper.

## **1. EMPLOYMENT OF PWD – BARRIERS, CHALLENGES AND RISKS**

The act of engaging in employment for people who seek employment in the labour market requires meeting certain conditions that render a particular applicant competent to deliver job-related activities in a given area. In addition to willingness to engage in employment as a basic prerequisite, some of the most common requirements are as follows: adequate education, flexible skills and competences, a well-developed professional profile in areas that sought on the market, readiness to adapt to market conditions, the general ambience in the labour market, etc. In addition to layers of complexity associated with employing PWD in the aforementioned conditions, there are issues related to internal and external barriers and inadequate work experience (Winn & Hay, 2009). External barriers include a lack of employment opportunities (Grant, 2008), a lack of adequate support (Shier et al., 2009), discrimination and stigmatisation in the workplace (Butcher & Wilton, 2008; Winn & Hay, 2009, cited in Shier et al., 2009). In addition to the barriers listed above, circumstances that further complicate the situation include: stereotypical perceptions and interpretations of disabilities, physical inaccessibility, cultural prejudice. Crawford and Martin (2000) suggest that PWD are provided with a certain form of secured social comfort, but they are still marginalised throughout the process of employment (Shier et al., 2009:63).

Exercising the right to employment is a powerful protective factor that serves as a prevention mechanism for social isolation. Contrarily, lack of employment results in social isolation, particularly for people who were previously socially “included” (Burchardt, 2003). Existing outside of the labour market increases the risk of poverty and social exclusion for PWD, to a greater degree than it does for persons who do not suffer from any form of disability. The said risks are not individual in character, given that they are more pronounced in families with PWD than they are in other households (MacInnes, et al. 2014:32). Poverty represents not only material, but immaterial deprivation as well, and a lack of opportunities (Šućur, 2006:249). Therefore, the social position of PWD is complicated by a number of factors.

The position of PWD in the labour market is a significant determinant of their opportunities in life, as much as it is for all people. This is particularly relevant because activities in the labour market do not only contribute to social security, but they also facilitate overcoming social isolation and the feeling of unequal treatment caused by the shadow of disability (Heera, Devi, 2015:55, cited in Schur et al., 2009). Échevin (2013) argues that, in addition to challenges related to employment, PWD face a number of other challenges in relation to accessing the labour market and positioning themselves in a workplace in line with market requirements. A significant number of authors argues that the spectrum of challenges that PWD face is rather broad, ranging from a lack of education, skills and training, over a lack of financial resources, issues with adaptation of workplaces, to attitudes and perceptions of employers regarding employment of PWD (Schur et al., 2009; Vandekinderen et al., 2012, cited in Heera, Devi, 2015:55). Employers are frequently the weak link in the architecture of social integration of PWD. Marumoogae (2012) argues that an important factor in the process of integration of PWD into the labour market is changing the approach of employers, who play a crucial role in implementing activities of significance to the general public. Kang (2013) posits that suboptimal results in employment of PWD are a consequence of the fact that most activities target development of PWD, while very few activities target employers, their human resources and real needs. Similarly, Vornholt et al. (2013) observe that the majority of studies address direct experiences of PWD with a marginal focus

on the requirements of employers (Vornholt et al., 2013, cited in Heera i Devi, 2015:57). Ball and Samant (Ball et al., 2005, Samant et al., 2009) argue that employing PWD can significantly contribute to promoting a culture of cooperation and increase chances of success for the organisation. Heera and Devi (2015) emphasise that understanding the factors that are vital for the perspectives of employers can significantly improve chances of employment and gaining work experience for PWD. The overall approach to solving problems of unemployment of PWD is shaped by activities in the following three groups of mutually linked determinants: capabilities and motivation of PWD, readiness and capacities of employers, and support to interested social subjects through adequate policy making (the state, local self-administrations, civil societies, civic initiatives, etc.). It is important to bear in mind that work engagement of PWD through utilisation of their potentials is a process that takes time (which applies to persons without disabilities as well), and a process that depends on a series of factors: job descriptions and work assignments, existing competencies, which are at times dependent on their academic background, previous training and professional development, individual capacities and the status of the person in terms of levels of empowerment and independence, insistence on equality of cultural identities, and the level of support provided to employers, and their dedication and requirements. By employing PWD, employers gain economic and social benefits, and provide a humane contribution in the interest of the general public and the society. Such activities not only ensure preservation of economic sufficiency for PWD, but provide possibilities for creating social networks and contacts, and establishment of control in managing their own lives (Beynon and Taker, 2006:80).

## **2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This paper aims to examine the position of PWD in the socio-economic context of Boka Kotorska. The foundational premise is that improvement of the legislative framework, and intensive work in the area of defining strategic principles for employment of PWD are considered ineffective until internal and external barriers



are removed or at least alleviated. Interpretation of data from the research will aim at providing answers to the following questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes of persons with disabilities towards education?
- 2) How did their disability and the age at which they acquired the disability affect their education?
- 3) What are the general attitudes of PWD towards employment?
- 4) How do the type of disability and the age at which a person acquired the disability affect their interest in employment?
- 5) How did the challenges in active search for employment affect PWD?
- 6) What type of work engagement are PWD who want to work interested in?

Answers to these questions may provide insight into potential internal and external barriers that affect the position of PWD in the labour market. Additionally, they will facilitate the process of understanding any potential differences (education, type and form of disability, age) that affect the access to the labour market for PWD.

## **2.1 Research methodology and sample**

The research study conducted as part of the project entitled “New Knowledge for New Beginnings for PWD” was implemented by the NGO “Nova šansa u Novom“, in partnership with the NGO “Novi razvoj”. With the aim of collecting data for the aforementioned research questions, a survey was conducted in the area of Boka Kotorska, in the municipalities of Tivat, Kotor and Herceg Novi. The survey was delivered to 31 PWD (23 unemployed, and 8 employed) in the area of Boka Kotorska, aged 18-65, in both categories - employed and unemployed. The process of pondering enabled the transfer of findings to a sample of 244 persons, officially registered as unemployed in local employment bureaus in Tivat Kotor, Herceg Novi, as well as 83 PWD registered as employed.



The research considers the following basic sociodemographic characteristics of participants: gender, age, type of education, level of education, type and form of disability. A total of 45% of research participants are male, while 55% are female. The majority of those surveyed belong in the age group of 30 and older (84%). Almost a third of participants are in the age group 40-50, while youth in the age group 18-25 and 25-30 make for 10% and 6% of the sample, respectively. The survey shows that almost two thirds of research participants with congenital or acquired disability completed high school education, whether it is three-year or four-year high school programmes. A total of 79% of research participants acquired a disability upon completing high school education. A total of 14% of those surveyed completed some form of high professional education and suffer from a congenital disability, while 20% of those surveyed acquired a disability during education. The results also indicate that only 6% of those surveyed, all of whom suffer from a congenital disability, attended school for children with special needs, while the others attended standard schooling programmes. The majority of research participants acquired a disability upon finishing education (61%), while almost a quarter of the research participants suffered from a congenital disability. Among those suffering from a congenital invalidity, the majority is younger than 25, while the majority of people who suffer from a disability acquired during education are in the 25-30 age group. A significant percentage of people who suffer from a disability acquired upon completing education is in the 40 and older age group.

Among those surveyed, 55% suffer from a moderate form of disability (between 50% and 79% disabled), and this form of disability occurs most frequently in the 40-50 age group (over 80%). Mild disability (between 20% and 49% disabled) is evidenced in less than half of research participants. The majority (89%) of people suffering from a mild disability are in the 50 and older age group. The most frequent form of disability is spine injury (26%). This type of disability occurs frequently in the 30 and older age group, and is most frequent in the 50 and older age group. There are specificities in the types of disabilities typical for certain age groups. The most frequent type of disability among research participants in the 18-25 age group is caused by physical injury of upper or lower extremities. The 25-20 age group frequently reports hearing loss,

while the 30-40 age group reports issues such as multiple sclerosis, combined problems and epilepsy, and the 40-50 age group reports autoimmune and malignant diseases. Persons in the 50 and older age group frequently report cardiovascular issues.

An integral part of this research was a desk-analysis of reports on businesses in Boka Kotorska and their balance of payments, using Tax Administration data, focus groups with PWD, their family members and employers, as well as semi-structured interviews with employers (both those who employ and those who do not employ PWD), and representatives of institutions at the local level (local employment bureaus, centres for social work, municipality administrations).

### **3. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 PWD and the labour market in Boka Kotorska – general data**

According to data from the Employment Agency of Montenegro, unemployment in Montenegro towards the end of 2019 was at 16.29%, with 32.802 people registered as unemployed (MON-STAT, 2019).

Direct cooperation between municipalities and employment bureaus is characterised as adequate, as confirmed by previous research.<sup>4</sup> Analysis of unemployment in the municipalities of Tivat, Herceg Novi and Kotor confirms that there are 244 unemployed PWD in the area.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, a total of 0.063% of all unemployed PWD in Montenegro (11.173) are registered as unemployed in the three municipalities in Boka Kotorska. Basic profile analysis points to a correlation between employment status and level of

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4 Cooperation between local employment bureaus and municipalities is mainly good, and the most frequent forms of cooperation are as follows: public works, funding salaries for interns through employment actions, and participation in definition of local plans for social inclusion and development of social services (Bežovan et al. 2013:47).

5 There are 66 PwD registered at the employment bureau in Tivat, 120 at the employment bureau in Herceg Novi, and 58 PwD registered as unemployed in Kotor (EAM, 2019).

education. In all the aforementioned three municipalities in Boka Kotorska, the majority of unemployed PWD have obtained a level I qualification in education. In Kotor and Herceg Novi, with the exception of Tivat, the majority of PWD who are undeployed have a level III qualification.

In the municipalities of Tivat, Herceg Novi and Kotor, 83 PWD are registered as employed. Classified according to type of contract, 23 persons have a temporary contract, while 60 have a permanent contract.

### **3.2 PWD and employers in Boka Kotorska**

An overview of the structure of employers in Boka Kotorska indicates that out of the 57 businesses that employ 83 PWD in the territory of Herceg Novi, Kotor and Tivat, 49 function as *limited liability companies* (LLC), while one employer is registered as a *public limited company*. Only two NGOs in the three municipalities employ PWD, and four employers fall into the category of *local self-administrations* or *their directorates* (TAM, 2019). Employment in the public and civil sector is reduced to a minimum.

A total of 5.408 businesses are registered in the region of Boka Kotorska (MONSTAT, 2019). There are 2.467 businesses registered in Herceg Novi, 1.573 in Tivat, and 1.368 in Kotor. A comparison of the number of registered employers in Boka Kotorska with the number of employers who employ PWD reveals that less than 1% of businesses in Boka Kotorska participate in employing this category of the population. Herceg Novi has the largest number of businesses that employ PWD (35). There are fewer businesses that employ PWD in Tivat (10) and Kotor (12) combined, than there are in Herceg Novi alone (TAM, 2019). Most businesses that employ PWD employ only one person (the total number of employees). Small and medium-sized enterprises (with up to 30 employees) employ the majority of persons with disabilities in this region, while there are only five large enterprises and institutions (with more than 50 employees) that employ persons with disabilities.. Therefore the size of the company, i.e. the total number of employees, and the number of employees with a disability are inversely correlated.

Employers show modest level of sensibility and awareness for hiring PWD, despite the associated benefits and legal obligations. A total of 73% of businesses in Boka Kotorska employ up to 10 persons (Tax Administration of Montenegro, 2019). For such businesses, there are no legal obligations to employ PWD, according to the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of PWD in Montenegro (articles 22 and 23).

Semi-structured interviews, conducted during the research, indicate that employers aspire to being perceived as socially responsible actors, but those aspirations come with expectations. Primarily, they express a need for precise information on educational profiles and skillsets of PWD, particularly those relevant for the company's business profile; advice on the expected impact that PWD may have on other employees; guidance on workplace adaptation; and shorter procedures for workplace adaptations. However, the focus of the final outcome of any efforts to employ PWD revolves around their own business interests.

Analysis of balance of payments of businesses in all three municipalities indicate that the majority of businesses that employ PWD have an annual turnover of up to €50.000 (22 such businesses). Larger turnovers, €50.000 - €200.000 have been registered by 16 businesses (Tax Administration of Montenegro, 2019). There are seven businesses that employ PWD with turnovers over €1 million. Large turnovers indicate that businesses have great potential for growth, but such businesses also seem to employ fewer PWD. In practice, the majority of large businesses opt for paying a fee to the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of PWD. The current situation in terms of employment of PWD in Boka Kotorska does not correspond with the intention of the legislator to have a normative framework in place that would stimulate employment of PWD. Article 21 of the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of PWD prescribes the following: a) employers with 20 to 50 employees must employ at least one person with a disability; b) for employers with more than 50 employees, 5% of the total workforce must be PWD (Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of PWD, article 21).<sup>6</sup>

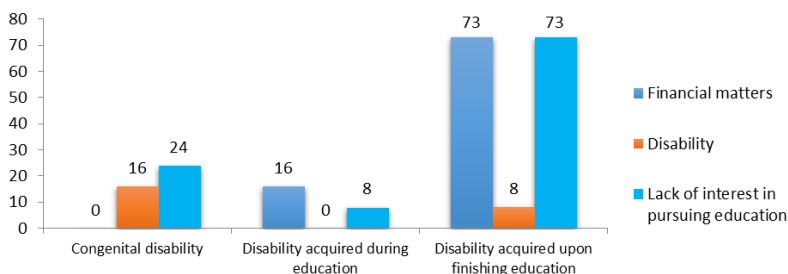
6 Article 22 of the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of PWD defines obligations on behalf of employers if they do not employ PwD. An "employer who fails to employ the PWD pursuant to the Article 22 of this law shall, for every

The lack of engagement among employers in Boka Kotorska can be interpreted from several perspectives. Firstly, it may be attributed to not being informed on the options, rights and obligations defined in the legislation. Secondly, there may be a social barrier imposing a view that employment of PWD does not bring a commercial or a social benefit. Thirdly, there are infrastructural inadequacies that render access to business premises difficult. Subsequently, due to poor conditions for development of entrepreneurship and a high volume of business barriers there is a general lack of interest in employment. Additionally, a form of cohesive tissue between employers and PWD, that could take the form of various types of initiatives, is lacking. Finally, the public and civil sector have proven to be ineffective in improving employment prospects for PWD. In reality, a combination of all of the aforementioned factors drive decision-making processes among employers, rather than any circumstance in particular.

### 3.3 Attitudes towards education

The research study focused on compiling data on the perception of PWD on education, and the different types of education that would be adequate. Education is the foundation for integration of PWD into the community, and affect employment prospects and prospects for finding adequate employment.

Chart 1. Reasons for discontinuing education, depending on the period in which a disability occurred

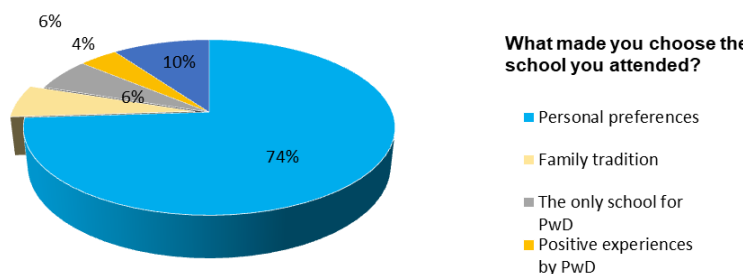


Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

person that the employer has failed to employ, pay a special fee for professional rehabilitation and employment of PWD on payment of income and contributions” (Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of PWD, Article 22).

Disability has been quoted as a reason for discontinuing education by 11% of PWD. Financial issues were an obstacle for 41% of research participants. Lack of interest in pursuing education has been quoted by the majority of those surveyed (48%) (Chart 1). For people with a congenital disability, lack of motivation was the overarching cause for not pursuing education. For people who acquired a disability upon completing an education programme, financial matters and lack of interest in pursuing education further were the main reasons for not continuing with education programmes. For 74% of people, personal preferences were key in selecting education programmes. For 6% of those surveyed, family tradition played a role in discontinuing education programmes, as well as insufficient options for schooling for PWD (6%) (Chart 2). Data show that research participants were generally not interested in pursuing education, regardless of the type of disability they suffered (congenital vs. acquired).

Chart 2. PWD and education choices

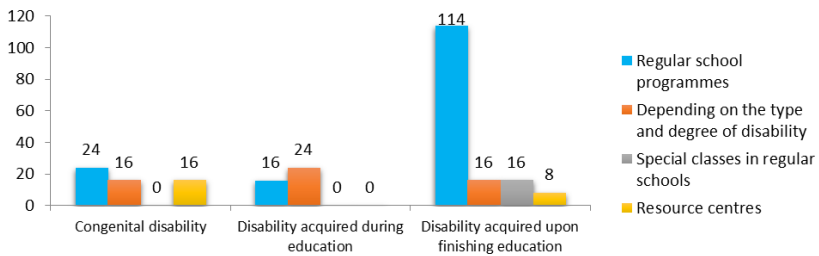


Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

Almost a third of research participants hold the view that education is not adapted for the needs of PWD (Chart 3). Simultaneously, 71% agree that municipalities offer various options for informal education. For 61% of research participants, the most adequate form of education for PWD are regular school programmes, adapted to PWD. However, 39% of those surveyed argue that regular school programmes are not adequate for PWD. A total of 23% of research participants believe that education for PWD

should be organised in specialised schools, depending on the type and degree of disability, while 10% support implementation of school programmes in resource centres. Only 6% of those surveyed advocate schooling in special classes inside regular schools.

Chart 3. Adequate education depending on the period in which a disability occurred



Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

Less than half of the group of people with congenital disabilities, and almost two thirds of those who acquired a disability upon finishing education believe that the most adequate form of education is regular schooling adapted to the needs of PWD. Less than two thirds of those who acquired disabilities during education believe that organisation of education programmes should depend on the type and degree of disability. Education in resource centres and special groups or classes in regular schools were judged as the least adequate options. For 29% of research participants, the main obstacle in education is the lack of adaptation in educational institutions to meet the needs of PWD, and insufficiently trained educational staff. Almost one fourth of research participants feel that their poor financial status is their biggest problem.

Findings from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups allude to certain fallacies in the education system, including the following: architectural barriers, inaccessible teaching processes and testing, inaccessible literature, lack of support services. Generally speaking, it is believed that the majority of PWD frequently do not possess or do not have the possibility to acquire

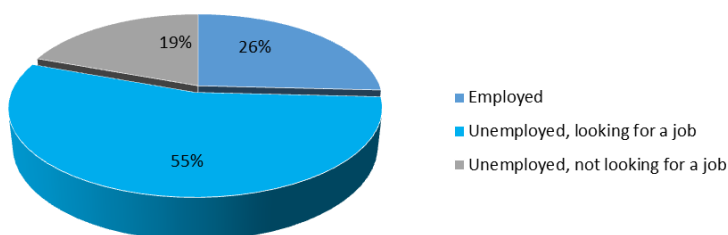


knowledge and skills in the area of foreign languages, IT literacy, entrepreneurship, marketing, business communication, management and organisational skills.

### 3.5 Attitudes towards employment

The research study illustrated that one fourth of PWD are employed (Chart 4). A little more than half of those surveyed are registered as unemployed, but are actively seeking employment (55%). One fifth of research participants are unemployed and are not seeking employment, and most of them are older than 50, with lower levels of motivation to seek employment.

Chart 4. Employment of PWD in Boka Kotorska



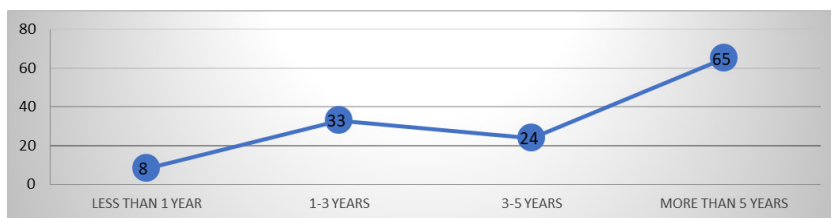
Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

The category of employed PWD is dominated by those older than 50 (38%). Two thirds of those who are unemployed and seeking employment belong in age groups of 30-40 and 40-50. The majority of unemployed that are seeking employment are approaching the age of retirement. Half of those who are registered as unemployed and are not seeking employment are 50 years old or older. The research identified a link between the level of education and employment status. Two thirds of employed PWD in the sample graduated from a four-year high school programme or a “higher professional school”. Simultaneously, 83% of those who are unemployed and seeking employment graduated from three-year or four-year high school programmes. The research sample

also includes PWD who are unemployed and hold only elementary education. Among those who are registered as employed, there are no cases of people with a level VII qualification (university degree), but they make for 10% of the population of unemployed PWD seeking employment. People who acquired a disability upon completing education make for the majority of employed and unemployed PWD, regardless of whether or not they are active job seekers. Persons with congenital disabilities mostly comprise the category of unemployed and not seeking employment.

Research findings suggest that the majority of PWD spend a considerable amount of time on the waiting list while seeking employment (Chart 5). Half of research participants have been looking for a job for more than five years, while 6% have been seeking employment for less than one year. Almost two thirds of those who are unemployed have had job interviews in the past five years.

Chart 5. How long do PWD seek employment?



Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

The research confirms that 42% of those surveyed had a job prior to acquiring a disability. PWD mainly receive information on job availability via employment bureaus (58%). The majority of PWD in Boka Kotorska would be willing to take a job that is adapted to their needs and capacities, and they are least willing to take just any job. One fourth of research participants expect employment bureaus to be sources of support in employment, while 16% rely primarily on family and friends, and 13% expect support from organisations that deal with rights of PWD. Data show that

PWD almost equally rely on associations, personal contacts and other services in seeking employment.

The research looked into the views of PWD on a number of questions and problems related to employment (Table 1). Almost half of research participants have been exposed to prejudice and lack of understanding in the workplace. Only one fourth of those surveyed never experienced problems while seeking employment. The next most frequent barrier they face while seeking employment are objective (physical) obstacles such as architectural barriers and inadequately adapted workplaces, which affected 24% of PWD (employed and unemployed). Every other person with a disability that is not looking for a job stated that they felt demotivated to seek employment due to prejudice and lack of understanding among employers.

Table 1. Problems that PwD experienced while seeking employment

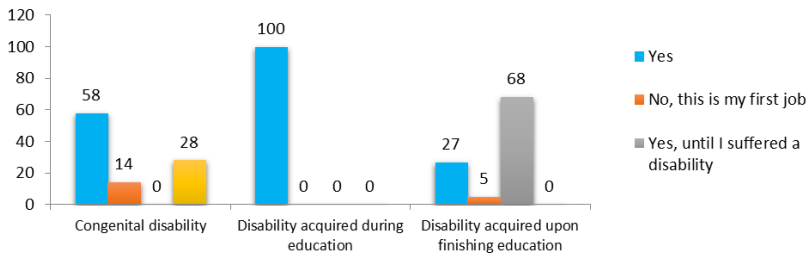
	Did not experience problems	Prejudice and/or lack of understanding on behalf of employers	Architectural barriers and workplaces that are not adapted for PwD	Inability to adapt work hours	Other
Employed	75.4%	12.3%	12.3%	0%	0%
Unemployed and looking for a job	5.8%	59.1%	11.7%	5.8%	17.5%
Unemployed and not looking for a job	0%	50.0%	0.0%	0%	50.0%

Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

Full work hours are acceptable for almost a third of research participants. Work hours in the range of 4-8 hours a day was acceptable for 41% of research participants. Almost a half of research participants find that workplaces are adapted to the needs and

capacities of PWD. All research participants with work experience reported that they were subject to equal treatment as other employees. However, 16% of PWD reported that workplaces were partially adapted or not adapted at all to their needs and capabilities. Research participants that acquired a disability during education reported that they had previously been employed. Among those who acquired a disability upon completing education, almost two thirds had worked prior to suffering from a disability.

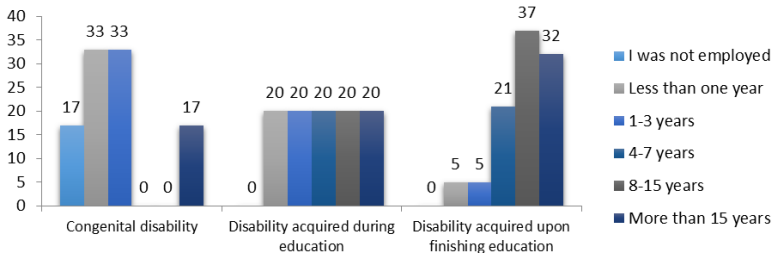
Chart 6. Previous employment in relation to the period in which a disability occurred (%)



Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

Among research participants who were employed prior to acquiring a disability, the majority report having 8-15 years of work experience or more than 15 years of work experience (Chart 6). Almost one third of research participants who acquired a disability upon completing education fall in the aforementioned category in terms of work experience.

Chart 7. Years of work experience in relation to the period in which a disability occurred (%)



Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

The majority of research participants with a congenital disability report having less than one year of work experience (Chart 7). Among those with a long work experience (15 years or more) the majority suffers from vision loss. Among research participants with little work experience (less than one year), the majority suffers from multiple sclerosis or epilepsy. Apart from vision loss, research participants report disabilities such as hearing loss, spinal injury, mental illness, heart and autoimmune diseases. Data show that half of research participants have more than eight years of work experience, and more than a quarter have 15 or more years of work experience. In other words, there is both capacity and willingness among PWD to keep their jobs, and to satisfy the criteria of their employers for long periods of time.

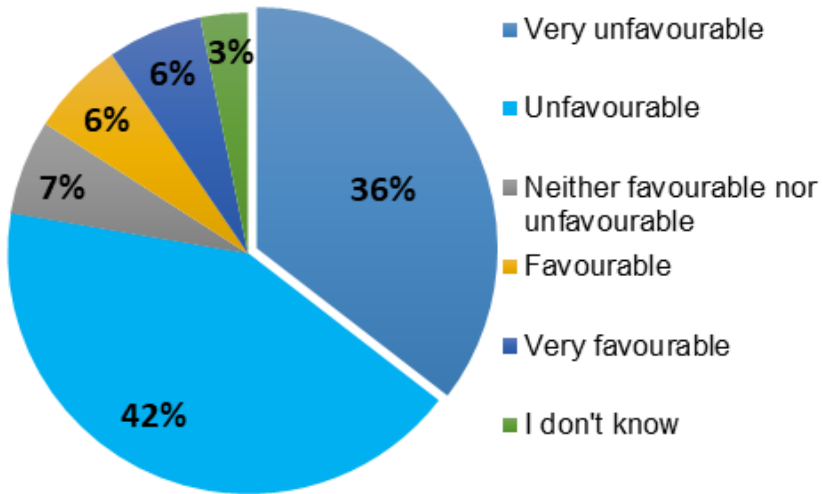
Table 2. Attitudes regarding employment prospects in relation to the age of research participants

	Highly insecure	Insecure	Neither secure not insecure	Employed	Other
18 - 25	33.3%	33.3%	0%	33.3%	0%
25 – 30	0%	0%	50.0%	50.0%	0%
30 - 40	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
40 - 50	20.0%	30.0%	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%
50+	0%	33.3%	0%	33.3%	33.3%

Insecurity in terms of employment prospects is reported by almost one half of research participants (Table 2). Two thirds of research participants that are unemployed and looking for a job feel very insecure or insecure about future employment prospects. Insecurity is reported most frequently by those who are unemployed and are active job seekers. Two thirds of research participants younger than 25, and half of the participants in the 30-50 age group do not report feeling positive about future employment prospects. More than half of the research participants characterise

work opportunities in Boka Kotorska as unfavourable or highly unfavourable (Chart 8). Contrarily, 12% of research participants find that employment opportunities are favourable.

Chart 8. Employment opportunities in Boka Kotorska



Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

Data from the survey confirm the views gathered in semi-structured interviews on problems regarding employment. In addition to problems related to inaccessibility of certain public institutions and businesses premises in the area of Boka Kotorska, research participants emphasise the fact that PWD frequently do not possess the informal knowledge and skills required by employers (acquired through courses, trainings and workshops).

Table 3. In your opinion, what would improve the quality of life of employed and unemployed PWD?

	Jobs adapted to capacities	Better jobs	Better quality and accessibility of health services	Greater social benefits	Socialisation and availability of cultural content and entertainment	Work-occupational therapy	Shorter work hours	Modern medical or mobility aids	Grants for launching businesses	Resolved housing issues
Employed	0%	12.5%	37.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	37.5%	12.5%	0%
Unemployed and looking for a job	47.1%	0%	23.9%	0%	11.6%	5.8%	5.8%	0%	5.8%	0%
Unemployed and not looking for a job	0%	0%	16.7%	50.0%	0%	16.7%	0%	0%	0%	16.7%

Source: PWD in Boka Kotorska, 2019.

Jobs that are better adapted to the capacities of PWD and better health services were assessed as positive contributions to the quality of life by half of the research participants, while 20% believe that the same objective would be accomplished with modern medical aids and increased social benefits (Table 3). For 3% of research participants, an important factor in terms of quality of life is shorter work hours. For employed PWD, greater availability of health services and medical aids play an important role in improving their overall quality of life. Almost a half of unemployed PWD seeking employment believe that their quality of life would improve if they were able to find a job that would accommodate their capacities. A half of unemployed research participants who are not seeking employment believe that increased social benefits



would lead to a better quality of life (Table 3). Analysis of the age structure and the needs that research participants emphasised in the research indicate the following: a) research participants in the age group of people younger than 25 believe that increased socialisation and better jobs would improve their quality of life; b) research participants in the age group of people younger than 30 believe that their quality of life would improve with greater accessibility of modern medical aids and grants for starting their own business; c) research participants in the age group of people younger than 40 believe that finding a job that is adapted to their capacities, and short work hours would contribute to their quality of life; d) the somewhat older group of people younger than 50 emphasise the importance of greater accessibility of health services and jobs adapted to their capacities as factors that drive the quality of life; e) for people in the 50 and older age group, greater accessibility of health services and greater social benefits are important contributors to the quality of life (PWD in Boka, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Processes related to employment of PWD with existing knowledge and skills in the region of Boka Kotorska are further complicated by the fact that their position is determined by apparent internal and external barriers. The majority of the unemployed in this region have been registered at employment bureaus for a considerable period of time. Reduced motivation to engage in actively seeking employment is notable, alongside an almost complete lack of active orientation to the idea of self-employment, due to objective and subjective unfavourable circumstances. Reduced motivation is experientially conditioned by concrete shortages in the labour market, education, infrastructural issues at certain locations, and age. The vast majority of research participants discontinued education due to financial reasons, and a lack of interest, which indicates strong material and non-material sources of deprivation, as well as a general lack of services at the local level. Data show that the number of unemployed PWD is twice as high as the number of employed PWD in the region of Boka Kotorska. University-level education does not provide immunity from unemployment, as evidenced by the fact that none of the currently employed PWD

hold a level VII qualification (university-level degree), although there are instances of persons with that status officially registered as unemployed. Evidently, in many instances, education as a factor in employment is not considered sufficiently proactive to overcome challenges brought about by a “disability”. Simultaneously, very few PWD partake in professional rehabilitation programmes implemented by local employment bureaus. The labour market imposes additional barriers that are further complicated by the registered deficit of education among PWD, and insufficient flexibility in the education system. Research findings indicate that, in addition to minimal engagement on behalf of employers (less than 1%), activities of public services and NGOs are not perceived as proactive. The majority of PWD work in small businesses, that frequently employ only one person. Such conditions do not provide for opportunities to progress and advance professional skills. Prejudice and a lack of understanding among employers are a disincentive for one half of the research participants, and a factor that resulted in them no longer seeking employment. Workplace adaptation is still an issue, and a quarter of research participants report being affected by it. Two thirds of research participants who are unemployed and are not seeking employment feel very insecure or insecure about their future in the labour market, and describe employment opportunities in Boka Kotorska as unfavourable or very unfavourable. Differences in the form and type of disability affect access to the labour market. Persons with congenital disabilities have the least work experience or years of service (less than one year), while persons that acquired a disability upon completing education and have previous work experience hold the longest years of service records. Significant differences are notable in how age affects expectations with regards to employment. The majority of PWD that took part in this research wants to work, and their motivation to engage in employment is not an issue. They hope to find employment, and aspire to better job positions, assistance grants, adapted workplaces, and adapted work hours. Motivation to seek employment is at its lowest among PWD in the 50 and older age group.

The social ambience in Boka Kotorska has still not reached a level of affirmation that would result in equality in the sphere of employment of PWD. A lack of a solid feedback loop between expressing a need for employment and providing a proactive reac-

tion to the need creates a gap between PWD and the majority population in Boka Kotorska. There is significant room for improvement of the position of PWD in the labour market in the area of gaining and developing competencies in their area of expertise. The various forms of a lack of sensibility in the labour market that this paper identifies indicate that distancing of minority identities is still a social reality. In the context of PWD, such distancing is fertile grounds for stigmatisation. Accordingly, Teodorović and Bratković argue that “by creating systems that aim at meeting the needs of the so-called average population, societies create systems that are, in their foundation, intolerant, thereby generating marginalised groups that deviate from the average population according to different criteria” (Teodorović and Bratković, 2001:282).

The current position of PWD in Boka Kotorska obliges the system to think about policies that will result in affirmation of the principle of equality of identities. Improvement of the overall ambience and the position of PWD in the labour market is only possible through application of synchronised policies at the local level, directed at creating a positive organisational culture. Meacham et al. (2017) emphasise the significance of embracing the values, talents and capabilities of PWD in organisational functioning, and increased engagement of PWD inside organisations in implementing innovative employment models (Meacham, H., Cavanagh, J., Shaw, A., & Bartram, 2017:1393). One of the prerequisites for this process is building strong relationships between local institutions, employers, PWD and the civil society with the help of state-level policy makers. Such an ambience enables proactive engagement through four levels of policy-making: prevention, protection, promotion, and propulsion (Hill, 2001, cited in Buchardt, 2003:2). Finally, a significant segment of the process of inclusion into the labour market is monitoring of PWD (work methods and work ambience). The results of such monitoring efforts can contribute to promoting existing work conditions, and can be used to promote employment of PWD and the benefits of such employment.

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