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ANNA ZIETEK, PhD in Pedagogy, Assistant Professor at
Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczno-Techniczna (Pedagogical
and Technical College) in Konin, Poland
ORCID 0000-0002-0173-3594
annazietek78@gmail.com

DISABLED PEOPLE: THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN PURSUING PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS

АННА ЗИТЕК, кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент, Вища
педагогічно-технічна школа у Коніні, Республіка Польща

ЛЮДИ З ОСОБЛИВИМИ ПОТРЕБАМИ: ЇХНІ ОЧІКУВАННЯ ТА МОЖЛИВОСТІ ЗАДОВОЛЕННЯ ПРОФЕСІЙНО-СОЦІАЛЬНИХ ПОТРЕБ

The paper presents theoretical considerations about people with disabilities and their expectations and opportunities in meeting professional and social needs. An analysis of the literature and legislation shows that the concept of disability is a multi-dimensional one. In the labour market system, the definition of disability refers to the degree, type and group of disabilities. In the vocational education system, the concept of special educational needs or special developmental needs has been introduced which diagnoses young people according to their opportunities, difficulties or limitations. An important task in the education system and in the labour market is to monitor the individual needs of people with disabilities and take initiatives to increase employment and professional activity in the open labour market. Appropriate identification of individual needs and possibilities of the disabled sets new tasks or improvement tasks for institutions and organisations supporting preparation for work, employment and professional activity of disabled people. The paper points to the importance of individualisation in meeting the needs of disabled people. It discusses the expectations of people with disabilities, which most often concern the choice of profession, vocational training, obtaining a job and professional independence, and employment, improvement and activity in the labour market. It formulates the needs for introducing integration measures on the basis of flexible and ad hoc tasks increasing access to education and workplaces and other forms of increasing mobility on the labour market. It shows the need to create a system to support the activity of non-

governmental organizations working for the benefit of education, socio-occupational rehabilitation and professional activity. A system based on an individual approach to people with disabilities will contribute to the creation of new opportunities in vocational education, employment in the open labour market and to the integration and positive reception of disability in the local environment.

Key words: people with disabilities, integration, vocational education, needs of people with disabilities, labour market

Анотація. У статті представлено теоретичні міркування щодо очікувань та реальних можливостей щодо задоволення професійних і соціальних потреб людей з особливими потребами. Аналіз наукової літератури та законодавчих документів засвідчує, що поняття інвалідності є багатовимірним. Автором зазначено, що у системі ринку праці визначення інвалідності стосується ступеня, типу та групи інвалідності. У системі професійної освіти впроваджено поняття "особливі освітні потреби" або "спеціальні потреби розвитку", яке дає підстави здійснювати діагностування молоді відповідно до їх можливостей, труднощів чи обмежень. Обґрунтовано, що важливим завданням у системі освіти та на ринку праці є моніторинг індивідуальних потреб людей з обмеженими можливостями та ініціатива щодо підвищення зайнятості та професійної активності. Відповідна ідентифікація індивідуальних потреб і можливостей людей з інвалідністю ставить нові завдання щодо інтегрування осіб з інвалідністю у соціумі, їх працевлаштування й професійної самореалізації. У статті вказується на значенні індивідуалізації у задоволенні

потреб людей з особливостями психофізичного розвитку. Акцентовано, що очікування цих людей найчастіше стосуються вибору професії, професійної підготовки, отримання місця праці та професійної незалежності, а також зайнятості, вдосконалення та активності на ринку праці. Вказано на потребі запровадження інтеграційних заходів на основі гнучких і спеціальних завдань, що уможливають доступ до освіти та робочих місць, інших форм підвищення мобільності на ринку праці. Йдеться передусім про створення системи підтримки діяльності неурядових організацій, що працюють на благо освіти, соціально-професійної реабілітації та професійної діяльності. Для цього необхідний індивідуальний підхід до людей з обмеженими можливостями, що сприятиме створенню нових можливостей у професійній освіті, працевлаштуванню на відкритому ринку праці та інтеграції, позитивному сприйнятті інвалідності в місцевому освітньо-професійному середовищі.

Ключові слова: люди з обмеженими можливостями, інтеграція, професійна освіта, потреби людей з особливими потребами, ринок праці.

Introduction. The life and work needs of people with disabilities, and thus their ability to meet them, depend on many factors. This is primarily related to the degree and type of disability, which in turn determines the ways in which life and work problems are solved, as well as activities supporting the education system, the employment system and professional activity in a protected and open labour market. The directions of these activities are implied by objectives serv-

ing the realization of professional and social needs of people with disabilities; these objectives, in turn, are described in the support system defined by the social and professional policy of the state. Important elements of the system supporting the participation of people with disabilities in social and professional life are regional or local programmes, targeted at people with various limitations and damage in the form of physical disability, sensory disability, complex disability or mental impairment (Sykowska, 1982, p. 28; Grodzinska, 2000, p. 46; Kirejczyk, 1981, p. 115).

The main material of the study. Disability is a complex concept, including various functional limitations resulting from a failure to perform a specific activity (Kirenko, 2006, p. 16). According to Prof. Tadeusz Galkowski, a person with a disability is "an individual in his or her full rights, who is disadvantaged by environmental, professional and social barriers which it cannot overcome in the same way as other people" (Galkowski, 1997, p. 120). A similar definition is used by Prof. Jozef Sowa, who states that "a disabled person is one in whom the damage and reduced fitness of the body has made it difficult, limited or impossible to perform life and professional tasks and fulfil social roles" (Sowa, 1999, p. 34). A specific understanding of disability can be found in the considerations of Prof. Władysław Dykcik, who, within the framework of special pedagogy, describes a disabled person as "an individual whose physical and/or mental state permanently or periodically hinders, restricts or prevents him/her from fulfilling life tasks and social roles" (Dykcik, 1997, p. 27). It can therefore be assumed that the definition of disability or a person with disability links the problem of disability with difficulties and the effects that these difficulties have caused (Gorecki, 1972, p. 11), while emphasizing the correlation of support with the participation of the person with disabilities in the education process and in the labour market. The above correlation includes, among other things, the process of vocational rehabilitation, in which a disabled person is accepted as a person with occupational disability. Thus, the analysis of the literature on the subject shows that occupational disability can serve as a criterion for recognising someone as a disabled person and as a criterion for determining the consequences of this disability (Majewski, 1999, p. 15–79). The criteria for recognising people as disabled distinguish two spheres: biological and social, which gen-

erally influence the wording of the definition assuming that a disabled person is a person whose disability has caused hindrance in performing tasks and fulfilling social roles (Majewski, 1999, p. 16). The definitions, which include the criterion of the consequences of a disability, define a person with a disability as:

"a person who, by reason of physical, somatic, mental or psychological characteristics and conditions, encounters serious difficulties in personal and professional life" (Hulek, 1981, p. 13);

"a person who, as a result of certain limitations, has considerable difficulty in performing the tasks that daily life, school, work and leisure time require" (Zablocki, 1992, p. 10);

"a person unable to provide for himself, in part or in full, the possibility of leading normal individual or social life" (Bulenda, 1993, p. 371).

Taking this criterion into account, disability can be categorised by degree and type. The Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled People (URL : <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20180001076>) sets forth the following degrees of disability:

significant degree of disability, concerning a person with impaired physical capacity, unable to take up employment;

moderate degree of disability, which refers to a person with impaired physical capacity, capable of performing employment in a workplace adapted to the needs and possibilities resulting from the disability, requiring partial or periodical assistance from another person in order to perform social roles in connection with a limited possibility of independent existence;

mild degree of disability, concerning a person with impaired physical capacity, capable of performing employment, not requiring the assistance of another person in order to perform social roles (URL : <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20180001076>).

The presented categorisation of disability ties the different causes and types of disability, introducing, for social and professional purposes, groups of disabilities. Wojciech Otrebski categorizes groups of disabilities, distinguishing people with behavioural disabilities, communication disabilities, independence disabilities, physical disabilities, dexterity disabilities and selective skills disabilities (Otrebski, 1999, p. 24).

The above analyses of disability taking into account the criterion of profes-

sional and social categorisation are complemented by defining disability as inability to work. The Act on Pensions from the Social Insurance Fund (URL: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19981621118>) defines disability as the inability to work of persons who have completely or partially lost their ability to work due to an impairment of the body, without expected regaining of the ability to work after retraining (URL: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19981621118>). This problem is defined differently in the Social Welfare Act (URL : <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20040640593>), where total inability to work within the meaning of the regulations on pensions from the Social Insurance Fund, as well as the inclusion of disabled people in group I or II or having a significant or moderate degree of disability are assumed within the meaning of the regulations on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people (URL : <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20040640593>).

It follows from the definitions presented that the notion of disability is a multi-dimensional concept, in terms of incapacity for work, which is related to the degree of disability, the type and group of disability. Such a perception of inability to work is determined by the authority empowered to do so, within the framework of the established assessment system. The system of assessment of disability or incapacity for work favours people with vocational and social disabilities, and in particular supports an education system in which the concept of disability is the overarching one and includes students with intellectual disabilities and students with disorders and dysfunctions of various kinds (Parys, 2007, p. 11). In the education system a disabled person is subject to specialist diagnostic influence in psychological-educational counselling centres or other specialist centres. The diagnosis issued by the adjudicating team is the basis for adapting the curriculum requirements and didactic and technical conditions to the actual needs and abilities of students with a specific disability. In addition, young people with disabilities receive additional support on the basis of decisions issued by county or voivodeship teams for assessing disability or degree of disability (URL : <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20031391328>).

These judgements form the basis for claiming reliefs and rights and social and professional support provided both in the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled People (URL : <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20031391328>) and in the Regulation of the Minister of Social Policy of 15 July 2003 on the assessment of disability and degree of disability (URL : <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20031391328>).

Diagnosing people with disabilities is a complex process, requiring a separate approach to adjudication. A considerable problem in this situation are the legal acts which define disability differently and regulate in different ways the tasks of individual entities supporting people with disabilities in meeting social and professional needs (Kurzynowska, 2005, p. 5). They also do not explicitly indicate the possibility of cooperation between the adjudicating systems and institutions and organisations supporting people with professional disabilities, which is visible, inter alia, in the programmes of voivodeship self-governments, counties, communes, as well as in the programmes of County Family Assistance Centres, County Labour Offices and the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities. Moreover, in response to the satisfaction of individual educational needs and difficulties of youth in the education system, the Team of Special Educational Needs Experts appointed by the Minister of National Education developed concepts and methods of diagnosis concerning special developmental needs (SDN) and special educational needs (SEN) (URL : <https://800100100.pl/specjalne-potrzeby-edukacyjne.id,3>).

Conclusion. The tasks assigned to individual institutions, in relation to the labour and education market, do not fully solve the problems of people with disabilities. They only take into account solutions with a particular focus on social and care programmes. However, the analysis of professional, educational and rehabilitation needs indicates that the expectations of people with disabilities most often relate to gaining a job, obtaining employment and professional independence, employment and activity in the labour market. The needs they emphasize the most are those of implementing integration measures on the basis of flexible and ad hoc tasks increasing access to vocational education, workplaces and other forms of professional activity.

It is also important to create a system supporting the activity of non-governmental organisations working for the benefit of education and socio-vocational rehabilitation. According to Prof. Janusz Kirenko the implementation of such a task depends on many factors, including both long-term support system and social and professional conditions (Kirenko, 2006, p. 27). Recognising that this problem is particularly important, Władysław Dykcik, quoted earlier, claims that with regard to equalisation of life chances of people with disabilities and the related needs and opportunities, an integrational European policy should be developed (Dykcik, 2006, p. 35). The proper identification of the needs and opportunities of people with disabilities, through the common objectives of European policies, will have a significant impact on the continuity of progressive change, inter alia in European employment and social perception of disability (Dykcik, 2006, p. 35). An important task of the European aid system is to constantly monitor the socio-occupational needs of people with disabilities and to seek and define directions for joint support (Ochonczenko, 2006, p. 56). An important factor leading to the solution of the above-mentioned problems is taking initiatives to increase educational opportunities, or to develop the skills of people with disabilities leading to increased professional activity in the European labour market (Ochonczenko, 2006, p. 56).

In terms of supporting tasks, according to Teodor Bulenda, it is important to move away from social benefit-oriented policies towards professional and social activation and to take into account international standards in shaping the policy towards people with disabilities (Bulenda, 2006, p. 31). The improvement of activities in this area will trigger the activity and independence of people with disabilities in the implementation of individual social and professional tasks (Loska, 2005, p. 178). Objectives based on the social and professional needs of people with disabilities will contribute to the creation of new perspectives and opportunities, both local and international. They may contribute to their full social integration and intensify the development of factors supporting employment and labour market participation. The interconnection of factors of social integration and the growing importance of the issues of professional and social activity, including the approach to disability itself, increases the chances for a new dimension of social integration (Bulenda,

2006, p. 34). As a result, it influences the development of opportunities for improvement of activities facilitating education, employment and professional activity, as well as meeting social and personal needs of people with disabilities.

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