KISS: Intro

2 AT 4 VIPs

KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE:

INTRODUCTION TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS

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INTRODUCTION

The partners of the "Keep it short and simple: Introduction to assistive technology for the visually impaired persons" project (also known as KISS), under the Key Action KA210 -ADU of the Erasmus+ programme, **aim to facilitate the integration of the blind and partially sighted persons into the labour market**. This goal is pursued through this handbook and other project deliverables.

To understand where the idea of this handbook comes from, it is important to get to know its context. To do so, it is necessary to get familiarized with the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships projects, in our case, small-scale partnership in adult education (KA210).

Namely, these projects aim to create links between organisations from different European countries which, by joining together, generate tools and resources within the field in which they carry out their professional activity, in our case, the field of disability, which can be shared and used by all those persons or organisations they consider appropriate to improve the performance of their work, thus improving their competences and enriching their resources.

The coordinating association of this project is CABPS, the Split County Association of Blind People, Croatia. It is an NGO founded in 1951 with more than 320 members. It works for an accessible and inclusive society with equal opportunities for blind persons to participate fully in all aspects of social, economic, cultural, and political life. Leveraging its extensive experience, CABPS introduced the KISS project to capitalize on the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme. Therefore, CABPS created a consortium with two organisations from other two European countries, i.e. Spain and Slovenia. On the one hand, the Spanish partner Formación Inclusiva, with experience in career guidance for persons with disabilities, and on the other hand, the Slovenian partner Medobčinsko društvo slepih in slabovidnih Kranj,

with a great experience in providing care and support to persons with visual impairments. The three European organisations have created a multidisciplinary team to develop the resources and materials foreseen by this project. These materials are, on the one hand, the handbook presented here, and on the other hand, a list of videos with short lessons on the use of assistive technology tools and devices for visually impaired persons to help them in their job search.

The most important target group of this project are blind and partially sighted persons aged 18-60 who wish to improve their digital skills and competencies using informal methods of education and training. All intellectual outputs of this project will be available free of charge for blind and partially sighted persons even after the implementation of the project activities.

Namely, assistive technology devices are available on the market, however, due to the lack of professional educational staff, persons with disabilities (hereinafter, PWDs) cannot get institutionalised support while learning to use new technologies that make it much easier for them to perform their work tasks. For this reason, all project materials are carefully created and adapted for the use of persons with visual impairments. Moreover, blind persons and educators with visual impairment have been involved in creating content for the digital handbook and OER with video lessons, so that they can motivate by their example other visually impaired to use new assistive technology tools and devices.

Another group that will be able to benefit from the results of this project are family members, friends, and colleagues of the visually impaired persons. Furthermore, educators, teachers, social workers, pedagogues, psychologists, employees of civil society organisations, staff of educational institutions, care centres, and social enterprises, all of whom encounter visually impaired persons in their work, but are not trained to help and support blind and partially sighted persons, can

benefit from using this Handbook. In addition, this group also includes journalists, media, public policy representatives, and other stakeholders who will inform the society about the project through advocacy and visibility channels.

Finally, project team members, employees, and volunteers from partner organisations will have the opportunity to improve their competencies during the implementation of this project. As a result, project cycle management, digital skills, presentation skills, team communication, communication in English, literacy skills, and critical thinking are some of the skills that the consortium members will reinforce in their daily work. The activities will bring together a total of 9 team members, of which at least 5 will be blind or visually impaired, who will be responsible for creating and presenting content, recording video lessons, preparing chapters for publication in the Handbook, and translating text materials from English into national languages. Employing PWDs in this project is just what represents added value and an example of good practice in the EU.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the CRPD)

In its **article 27**, the CRPD recognises the right to work of persons with disabilities and establishes the legal framework for the obligations of States Parties in relation to the work and employment of persons with disabilities, including visually impaired

Article 27: Labour and employment

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive, and accessible to persons with disabilities.

States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realisation of the right to work, including for persons who acquire a disability in the course of employment, by taking appropriate measures, including the enactment of legislation, inter alia:

(a) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions.

(b) Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunity and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and redress for grievances.

(c) Ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others.

(d) Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to comprehensive technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training.

(e) Encourage employment opportunities and career advancement of persons with disabilities in the labour market, and support them in finding, obtaining, maintaining, and returning to employment.

(f) Promote entrepreneurial opportunities, self-employment, setting up cooperatives and starting one's own business.

(g) Employ persons with disabilities in the public sector.

(h) Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through relevant policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives, and other measures.

(i) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is made for persons with disabilities

in the workplace.

(j) Promote the acquisition of experience by persons with disabilities

in the open labour market.

(k) Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation programmes, maintenance employment and return to work for persons with disabilities.

2. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities

are not held in slavery or servitude and are protected, in accordance with the law, on equal conditions with others, against forced or compulsory labour.[1]

[1] *The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Article 27, https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-27-work-and-employment.html*

CHAPTER 1: ANALYZING STATISTICAL DATA ON EMPLOYMENT OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS

Addressing the socio-occupational situation of persons with disabilities from a statistical perspective entails overcoming various obstacles related to available data sources. These challenges include:

- **Lack of disability-related databases.**

  The limitation of data sources is evident. However, recently, the collaboration between several associations, third sector entities and the administration has stimulated the creation of new statistics specialised in disability, mitigating this drawback. Nevertheless, there is still a need to make considerable progress in improving this aspect.

- **Lack of a harmonized European disability assessment mechanism.**

  Methodological divergences in disability assessment between various sources of information can lead to complications when trying to make comparisons.

- **Inconsistency in updating disability-related information across EU Member States.**

  Disparity in data update frequencies is a challenge. Variability in the timing of updates of information sources hampers both the timeliness and comparability of data.

- **Territorial breakdown.**

  In the most favourable scenario, information can only be broken down to the Autonomous Community level, which complicates any analysis at the provincial level.

Despite these drawbacks, some data to understand the state of play regarding employment of persons with disabilities in Europe can be obtained from the National Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2021-2027), according to which the unemployed and persons with disabilities are the most vulnerable population group, the former affected by economic exclusion and the latter by their disability. According to the latest available data (Croatian Public Health Institute 4 September 2023) there are 657,791 persons with disabilities registered in the Republic of Croatia. Among the total number, there are 21,728 persons with visual impairment, which is 3.3% of the total number of persons with disabilities. More than two thirds (17,058) of the registered visually impaired persons have a diagnosis of "low vision and blindness". By way of comparison, in Spain in 2021, there were 92,100 (4.8%) visually impaired adults aged 18-60. Considering the territorial dispersion of the aforementioned population, it is important to point out that three out of every five PWDs (58%) live in four autonomous communities: Andalusia (20%), Catalonia (15%), Madrid (13%) and the Valencian Community (10%). In urban areas with more than 10,000 people in total, 67% are PWDs; 16% of PWDs live in medium-developed urban areas, and 17% of PWDs live in rural areas with less than 2,000 inhabitants in total.

Slovenia has a population of 2.1 million, of which the share of persons with disabilities is 12-13%. Unfortunately, **there is no updated statistical data available for Slovenia**. Finally, according to Eurostat data for the year 2021, 29.7% of EU citizens who are persons with disabilities are on the verge of poverty and social exclusion.

➢ ***DATA FROM CROATIA[2]:***

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">657,791 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. DATA 2023</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Gender
Men: 369,242 (56.1%)
Women: 288,549 (43.9%)</td><td colspan="2">Age
0-19: 73,260 (11.20%)
20-64: 271,334 (41.2%)
65+: 313,197 (47.6%)</td><td>Age of persons with visual impairment:
0-19: 1,247
20-64: 6,777
65+: 10,272</td></tr>
<tr><td>Physical disability
188,623 (28.7%)</td><td>Visual disability
21,728 (3.3%)</td><td>Auditory disability
118,319 (18%)</td><td>Intellectual disability
32,522 (4.9%)</td><td>Mental disability
160,165 (24.4%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Persons with acquired disabilities: 136,434 (20.7%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Total number of employed persons with disabilities: 21,616 (52.5% men and 47.5% women)
Total number of unemployed persons with disabilities: 7,196 (53.9% men and 46.1% women)</td></tr>
</table>

[2] The data presented have been obtained from:
- Croatian Employment Service (HZZ). (October 2023). "Monthly Statistics Bulletin": *https://www.hzz.hr/app/uploads/2022/09/HZZ-bilten-10_2023.pdf*
- Croatian Public Health Institute (HZJZ). (September 2023). "*Report on Person with Disabilities in the Republic of Croatia":* https://www.hzjz.hr/wpcontent/uploads/2023/09/Izvjesce_o_osobama_s_invaliditetom_2023-1.pdf
- Croatian Employment Service (HZZ). (January 2023). *"Report on Activities of Croatian Employment Service in the Area of Persons with Disabilities in the Period from January 1st to December 31st 2022": https://www.hzz.hr/app/uploads/2023/04/Izvjesce-o-aktivnostima-HZZ-a-u-radu-s-OSI-za-2022.pdf*

➢ ***UNEMPLOYMENT***

Total Registered Unemployment Rates

At the end of October 2023, the Croatian Employment Service registered 109,889 unemployed persons, which is 6,272 persons more than in the previous month, and 2,238 persons less than in October 2022. Among them, 7,196 were persons with disabilities, representing 6.1 per cent of the total unemployed population registered with the Croatian Employment Service. In 2021 there were 6,179 persons with disabilities registered, a decrease of 16.5% compared to this year.

Unemployed, by Sex

Of the total unemployed in October 2023, there were 46,302 unemployed men (42.1 per cent) and 63,587 unemployed women (57.9 per cent). The number of unemployed men decreased by 3.6 per cent, while the number of unemployed women decreased by 0.8 per cent compared to October 2022. The share of men in registered unemployment rates decreased, while that of women increased by 0.7 percentage points in the reference period.

Unemployed with Disabilities by County

The highest number of unemployed persons with disabilities was registered in the city of Zagreb (1,350 or 18.7% of the total number of unemployed persons with disabilities in the Employment Service records), followed by Osijek-Baranja County (816 or 11.3%) and Split-Dalmatia County (618 or 8.5%).

Structure of the unemployed with Disabilities According to Age

The highest number of registered persons with disabilities is in the 55-59 age group (12.1% of unemployed persons with disabilities out of the total number of unemployed persons in the same age group). This is followed by persons with disabilities in the 20-24 age group with 867 persons (12%) and those in the 25-29 age group with 803 persons (11.2%).

Gender Structure of the Unemployed with Disabilities

Looking at the gender structure of the unemployed with disabilities in the Croatian Employment Service registers, men predominate (3,882 or 53.9%). On the other hand, among all unemployed persons in the Employment Service records, women constitute the majority at 56.4%.

Structure of Unemployed Persons with Disabilities by Level of Education

The majority of unemployed persons with disabilities registered with the Croatian Employment Service have completed secondary education (5,324 or 74%), out of which 3,914 (54.4%) persons with disabilities completed secondary education for up to three years, and 1,410 (19.6%) unemployed persons with disabilities completed secondary education for four or more years.

Of the total number of unemployed persons with disabilities, 401 (5.6%) persons with disabilities have higher education (180 persons) or completed higher education (221 persons), which represents a small percentage compared to the general population, where persons with higher levels of education constitute 15.5% of the total number of unemployed.

Structure of Unemployed Persons with Disabilities in Relation to Unemployment Duration

As in previous years, the majority of persons with disabilities are long-term unemployed, which leads to a loss of acquired knowledge and skills. This, coupled with their disability, further contributes to their lack of competitiveness in the open labour market. A significant percentage of people with disabilities (65.6%) who are long-term unemployed or face barriers to employment are increasingly distancing themselves from the labour market and require more individualised support to re-enter the labour force.

As of 31 December 2022, there were a total of 4,723 persons with disabilities registered with the Employment Service who had been unemployed for more than one year (65.6%). Of this number, 1,277 persons with disabilities

(20.1%) have been registered as unemployed for 8 years or more.

Structure of the Unemployed with Disabilities According to the Type of Disability in the records of the Croatian Employment Service, the largest number of unemployed persons have intellectual disability, with 1,837 persons, representing 25.5 per cent of the total number of unemployed persons with disabilities. This is followed by persons with combined multiple disabilities with 1,640 or 22.8 per cent and persons with physical disabilities with 1,372 or 19.1 per cent.

Structure of Unemployed Persons with Disabilities in Relation to the Method of Disability Acquisition and Gender

The largest group of unemployed persons with disabilities is made up of individuals classified as "Other disabled" depending on the method of acquiring the disability, such as those who have a decision on the right to assistance and care, decisions of the pension insurance system and others. There are 3,490 individuals in this category, which represents 48.5% of the total number of unemployed persons with disabilities. They are followed by persons who were assessed in the social assistance system before the age of 18, who number 3,193, i.e. 44.4% of the total number of unemployed persons with disabilities.

After several years during which persons with intellectual disabilities have constituted a majority in the records, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of persons classified as "Other Disabled". This may be associated with legislative changes and the transfer of responsibility for the entitlement to financial support for unemployed persons with disabilities, as well as the widening of the categories of individuals eligible for this entitlement if they are registered as unemployed.

➢ ***EMPLOYMENT***

To improve the position of persons with disabilities, the Croatian Employment Service carries out a number of activities and measures aimed at better and more effective integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market. In addition to the regular activities conducted within the Croatian Employment Service regarding the work with persons with disabilities, such as individual counselling, consultations, career guidance activities, persons with disabilities are regularly referred to vocational rehabilitation services. Furthermore, continuous efforts have been made to work with employers in order to sensitise and inform them about the possibilities of employing persons with disabilities.

- ***Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Croatia***

During 2022, a total of 131,938 persons were employed according to the new records of the Croatian Employment Service, of which 3,065 were persons with disabilities. Compared to 2021, when 2,740 persons with disabilities were employed, this represents an increase of 11.9%. Of the total number of employed persons with disabilities, 1,587 are men (51.8%), and 1,478 are women with disabilities (48.2%).

The percentage of employed persons with disabilities in the total number of employed persons according to the records of the Croatian Employment Service is 2.3% (the percentage of employed men with disabilities is 2.9%, and the percentage of employed women is 1.9%), which is an increase compared to the previous year (0.5%).

Out of the total number of persons with disabilities employed, 2,965 individuals (96.7%) were employed based on establishing an employment relationship, and 100 individuals (3.3%) on the basis of other business activities (registration of a company, crafts, employment contract, etc.).

In terms of the employment sector, the majority of persons with disabilities in 2022 were employed in Manufacturing (15.2%), followed by Hospitality (12.4%) and public administration and defence; compulsory social security (12%).

Looking at trends in employment and unemployment of persons with disabilities over the last ten years, there was a marked increase in the number of employed people with disabilities until 2017, followed by a decline. After three years of decline, partially influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of employed persons with disabilities has increased again in the last two years.

The number of unemployed registered with the Employment Service has increased again this year after last year's decline. One of the reasons for this increase is undoubtedly legislative changes and the transition of the right to financial compensation up to employment from the social assistance system to the employment system. The name of the entitlement has been changed to "financial support for unemployed persons with disabilities", and now persons who were not eligible for this entitlement in previous years in different systems (e.g. beneficiaries of personal disability benefit, beneficiaries of "assistance and care for others" benefit, persons with physical impairments, etc.) are entitled to this right. In recent months, there has been a significant registration of such persons in the registries of the Employment Service in order to make this entitlement effective.

The highest number of employed persons with disabilities is registered in the city of Zagreb (504 persons or 16.4% of the total number of employed persons with disabilities), followed by the county of Osijek-Baranja (320 persons or 10.4%) and the county of Brod-Posavina (200 persons or 6.5%).

- ***Percentage of People with Disabilities Employed by County***

The highest percentage of employed persons with disabilities, in relation to the total number of employed persons according to the records of the Employment Service, is observed in Međimurje County (4.9%), followed by Požega-Slavonia County (4.2%) and Bjelovar-Bilogora County (4.1%).

- ***Structure of Employed People with Disabilities in Relation to Level of Education***

The majority of employed persons with disabilities have completed secondary education, with a total of 2,448 persons (79.9% of all employed persons with disabilities). Of this group, 1,820 (59.4%) employed persons with disabilities completed secondary education in a duration of up to three years, and 628 (20.5%) individuals with disabilities completed secondary education in four or more years. There are a total of 296 employed persons with disabilities with higher education (full bachelor, professional studies, higher studies, full university, academy, master, or doctorate), representing 9.7 per cent, which is an increase of 1.3 per cent compared to the previous year.

- ***Structure of Persons with Disabilities Employed in Relation to the Method of Disability Acquisition***

In terms of the method of acquisition of disability, the largest group is made up of employed persons who were assessed in the social welfare system before the age of 18 (1,519 persons with disabilities or 55.4%), since the implementation of the new Act on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities under the Unified Assessment Body.

- ***Employment of People with Disabilities from Employment Service Records Based on Employment Relationships According to the Ten Most Common Occupations***

Persons with disabilities were most employed in the following occupations in 2022:

A) Maintenance Operator
B) Kitchen assistant
C) Cleaner
D) Administrative Officer
E) Home Assistant
F) Gardening worker
G) Manual packaging machine worker

H) Kitchen worker
I) Production line operator
J) Financial administrator

In 2022, men with disabilities were most employed in the following occupations: maintenance worker (180), garden worker (94) and kitchen helper (81). On the other hand, women with disabilities were predominantly employed in the following occupations: cleaner (166 persons), home care worker (142 persons) and kitchen helper (129 persons).

➢ ***VOCATIONAL REINTEGRATION IN CROATIA***

Vocational rehabilitation consists of activities aimed at preparing persons with disabilities for work, while preserving their remaining work and general skills. The aim is to increase the employability and social inclusion of unemployed persons with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation is often a prerequisite for employment, whether in the open labour market, under special conditions or in other models of employment or self-employment. Improving the quality of the vocational rehabilitation system is considered an important social priority.

In Croatia, the Croatian Employment Service decides in the first instance on the realisation of the right to vocational rehabilitation of unemployed persons with disabilities. The procedure for realising this right combines the rights provided for in two laws: **The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act and the Labour Market Act**. The decision-making process follows the General Administrative Procedure Act.

In all Croatian Employment Service offices there is a **Commission for the Rights of Disabled Persons in Unemployment**, whose work is defined by its rules of procedure. The commission includes a counsellor for rights during unemployment (a legal professional), a counsellor for the employment of persons with disabilities (a professional appointed for this function) and a counsellor for vocational guidance (a psychologist).

Unemployed PWDs are referred to vocational rehabilitation services offered by rehabilitation centres in Zagreb, Rijeka, Osijek, and Split. In 2022, the Croatian Employment Service referred 143 persons with disabilities to these centres, with total expenditure on travel, accommodation and meals amounting to 3,354,66 EUR. The Vocational Rehabilitation Centre in Zagreb temporarily suspended intake of cases from the Croatian Employment Service between February and October 2022 due to workload and capacity constraints.

The right to vocational rehabilitation is granted by a decision only to persons with disabilities who, after the Rehabilitation Assessment service, receive a Report and Opinion with a proposal for inclusion in other vocational rehabilitation services and an Individual Vocational Rehabilitation Plan. In the case of persons participating in educational activities through active labour market policies, decisions on the right to vocational rehabilitation are not issued, but only decisions on the right to financial support during education/training/vocational rehabilitation and transport costs.

Throughout the year, the Croatian Employment Service (HZZ) worked continuously on preparing persons with disabilities for employment in order to facilitate their successful integration into the labour market. In addition to regular consultations by employment counsellors, 361 persons with disabilities continued to receive career counselling services, including individual career information, and counselling, as well as group career information sessions by counsellors specialised in vocational rehabilitation and career development.

On 17 February 2022, the **Social Welfare Act and the Act on Amendments to the Labour Market Act** entered into force. These laws changed the actual jurisdiction to recognise the right to "Compensation up to Employment", with the Croatian Employment Service now deciding on this right instead of the social welfare centres, in accordance with labour regulations. The compensation until employment was renamed **"Financial assistance for unemployed persons with disabilities".** The procedure for obtaining this entitlement is initiated at the request of an unemployed

person with a disability, with the regional service/office deciding in the first instance, and the Central Office of the Service dealing with appeals against the first instance decisions.

In the case of recipients of in-work compensation who previously claimed this right under social assistance regulations, the Service automatically took over the documentation and initiated procedures to determine their eligibility for financial support under the amended Labour Market Act. A total of 1,013 transfer decisions were made. According to the amended law, **financial assistance for an unemployed person with a disability may be granted to a person who is on the records of the Employment Service after completing primary, secondary or higher education, from the age of 15, and who does not qualify for other entitlements stipulated in the Labour Market Act.** Unemployed persons with disabilities include children with developmental difficulties or persons with disabilities with physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments determined on the basis of the results and opinions of assessment bodies. **Approximately 3,000 new beneficiaries have been identified, bringing the total number of persons with disabilities receiving this financial support to more than 4,000**.

In light of the above, individuals with disabilities, apart from contracting the employees of the Croatian Employment Service for assistance and counselling, can also turn to the Institute for Expert Assessments, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, as well as to the staff of the local Social Welfare Centre. Employers have various state benefits available when employing individuals with disabilities. Unfortunately, due to general societal prejudices, persons with disabilities often face challenges in securing employment opportunities.

➢ ***DATA FROM SPAIN[3]***

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">1,929,400 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. DATA 2022</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Gender
Men: 1,096,000(56.8%)
Women: 833,400 (43.2%)</td><td colspan="2">Age
16-24: 111,000 (5.8%)
25-44: 424,000 (22.0%)
45-64: 1,394,400 (72.3%)</td><td>Area density
High-density: 1,025,600 (53.2%)
Medium-density: 633,700 (32.8%)
Low-density: 270,200 (14%)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Physical disability
844,300 (43.8%)</td><td>Visual disability
92,100 (4.8%)</td><td>Auditory disability
87,100 (4.5%)</td><td>Intellectual disability
200,300 (10.04%)</td><td>Mental disability
340,800(17.7 %)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Persons with acquired disabilities: 361,400 (18.7%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Degree of disability
33%-44%: 719,600 (37.3%)
45%-64%: 267,100 (13.8%)
65%: 386,500 (20%)
>75%: 191,500 (9.9%)</td><td colspan="3">Activity rate: 34.6% Employment rate: 26.9%
Unemployment rate:22.5%
Prevalence rate: 6.3%</td></tr>
</table>

[3] - Odismet. Observatory on Disability and Labour Market in Spain" *Report 8".*

https://odismet.es/sites/default/files/2023-05/INFORME%208.v2_0.pdf

- State Public Employment Service (SEPE). (2023). *"Report on the labour market for people with disabilities".* Data2022

https://sepe.es/SiteSepe/contenidos/que_es_el_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf_mercado_trabajo/2023/Informe-Mercado-Trabajo-Discapacidad-2023-Datos2022.pdf

➢ ***UNEMPLOYMENT***

Total Registered Unemployment Rates

The number of unemployed persons registered with the offices of the public employment services in Spain stood at 2,734,831 persons in November 2023. This represents a decrease of 0.89% compared to the previous month, equivalent to 24,573 fewer unemployed persons.

The unemployment rate among people with disabilities in Spain was 21.4% in 2022. The employment rate was 27.8%. The most significant characteristic of the PWD group is their low participation in the labour market. However, their labour force participation rate increased in 2022 by several percentage points, reaching 35.3%.

Unemployed Persons, by Gender

Looking at the unemployment rate by gender, 1.09 million men were unemployed in November 2023, compared with 1.65 million unemployed women. Compared with the previous month, male unemployment rate decreased by 0.78%, while female unemployment rate decreased by 0.96%.

There is no up-to-date data on unemployment rate by gender for persons with disabilities. The most recent data are from the year 2021. By gender, women with disabilities have a higher unemployment rate than men, with 23% compared to 22% for men.

Structure of the Unemployed with Disabilities, by Age

The highest number of persons with disabilities is concentrated in the 45-64 age group, accounting for 72.27% of the total group. In terms of activity or inactivity rates, the number of inactive persons is twice the number of active persons. The same situation is observed in the rest of the age groups, with a more pronounced imbalance in the under 25 age group. Here, the percentage of inactive population rises to 80.29 % of the total population within the group.

Gender Structure of the Unemployed with Disabilities

Among the unemployed with disabilities, the gender gap is relatively narrow, with only seven percentage point difference (65,484 for men compared to 75,500 for women). However, this gap has widened by two points compared to the previous year.

Structure of Unemployed People with Disabilities by Level of Education

When considering the distribution by level of education, significant differences exist between persons with and without disabilities. In both groups, the largest proportion of the population is concentrated in the "Secondary education and training and work integration programmes" level of education. Specifically, 61.06% of persons with disabilities and 55.78% of persons without disabilities fall into this category. Significant differences exist in the importance of the other two levels of education within each group. Among persons with disabilities, those at the "Illiterate and primary" level account for 20.26% of the group, which is fourteen points higher than the 6.08% represented among persons without disabilities. The disparity is even greater in the "Higher education, including doctorate" level, where 38.14% of persons without disabilities of working age fall, compared to only 18.67% of those with some type of disability.

Structure of Unemployed People with Disabilities in Relation to Unemployment Duration

In **2021,** a total of **92,748** persons with disabilities were long-term unemployed. This represents **64%** of the total number of jobseekers with disabilities. Although these figures represent a 14% decrease compared to the data from the previous year, it is true that the number of the long-term unemployed remains very high.

Structure of Unemployed with Disabilities by Type of Disability

Considering the type of disability of unemployed, we can see that of the 140,984 PWDs who have declared their type of disability, 67.9% have a physical disability, 21.76% have a mental disability, 9.07% have a sensory disability and 0.66% have

a language disability. Only 0.62% of persons registered as persons with disabilities have not declared the type of disability.

Unemployed People with Disabilities: Acquisition Method Structure

According to the type of acquired disability, it is distributed as follows:

- Physical Disability: 43.8%
- Disability due to illness or accident: 18.7%
- Mental disability: 17.7%
- Intellectual Disability: 10.4%
- Visual disability: 4.8%
- Auditory disability: 4.5%

➢ ***EMPLOYMENT***

Employment of People with Disabilities in Spain

The employment rates for persons with disabilities (**26.9%)** significantly differs from that of the general population (**66.3%), with a** gap of more than **39.4** percentage points.
"Only one in four persons with disabilities is employed".

Gender is not constituted as a differentiating variable.
The **25-44 age** bracket has the highest employment rate, which aligns with the highest activity rate within this age group.
Regarding the type of disability, individuals with **sensory disability (hearing and/or visual impairment)** appear to be employed to a greater extent than those with mental disability.
The degree of disability also affects the employment rate. Namely, individuals with higher degrees of disability face greater challenges in accessing the labour market, resulting in notably low employment rates.

Specifically, the data reveal that 1,455 persons with disabilities stipulated up to 15 contracts during the mentioned year.

"The same person is hired an average of 2.11 times during the year, which is evidence of the temporary and precarious nature of hiring."

- ***Percentage of People with Disabilities Hired by Autonomous Communities***

In terms of contract percentages, the areas with the largest populations – Andalusia, Catalonia, and Madrid – are at the top of the list.
Conversely, Ceuta, Melilla and La Rioja are at the opposite end.

- ***Structure of Persons with Disabilities Employed in Relation to Level of Education***

In terms of educational level, hiring is primarily concentrated at the **lower levels**. This is a consequence of the substantial volume of low-skilled employment generated.

Unaccredited primary education	101,937	33.1 %
ESO (compulsory secondary education)	109,942	35.7 %
Baccalaureate	22,216	7.2 %
VET (intermediate and higher education)	56,929	18.5 %
University Studies	16,859	5.5 %

- ***Persons with Disabilities in Employment: Acquisition Method Structure***

Physical disability	135,196	43. 9 %
Psychic disability	31,084	10.1 %
Sensory disability	18,324	6.0 %
Language disability	1,295	0.4 %

- ***Registered Employment Patterns of People with Disabilities in Common Occupations***

Common occupations with the highest contract volumes for persons with disabilities registered are the following:
Cleaning staff in offices, hotels, and other similar establishments (48,485),
Workers in manufacturing industries (28,006),
Other cleaning staff (8,225),
Building caretakers (8,909)
Clerical workers with customer service tasks not elsewhere classified (5,562)
In general, we observe low-skilled occupations.
At managerial level, only 69 contracts are recorded.

➢ ***VOCATIONAL REINTEGRATION IN SPAIN***

The model of professional integration for persons with disabilities in Spain is based on the promotion of equal opportunities and the elimination of barriers for their full participation in the labour market. Here are some of the key elements that generally form part of this model:

1. **Act on Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities (LISMI)**:

The Act on the Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities (LISMI) in Spain, now known as the General Act on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion, has played a pivotal role in promoting equal

opportunities and inclusion for persons with disabilities across various domains, including employment. Despite changes and updates to the legislation, the fundamental aspects of LISMI (and subsequent laws) are the following:

A. **Employment Reserve:**

LISMI stipulates that public and private companies employing more than 50 workers must reserve a percentage of their jobs for persons with disabilities. The percentage varies according to the size of the workforce.

B. **Obligation to contract:**

The regulations establish the obligation to hire persons with disabilities in order to comply with the established quota. Companies can fulfil this obligation through direct hiring, agreements with Special Employment Centres (CEE) or other formulas contemplated in the regulations.

C. **Special Employment Centres (CEE):**

The LISMI encourages the creation and support of Special Employment Centres, which are companies staffed mostly by persons with disabilities.

D. **Adaptation of the working environment:**

Adaptation and accessibility measures are promoted in the work environment to ensure that persons with disabilities can perform their work under equal conditions.

E. **Economic Incentives:**

Financial incentives are established for companies that meet or exceed employment quotas for persons with disabilities. These incentives may include subsidies, bonuses, and reductions in social security contributions.

F. **Training and Employment Guidance:**

LISMI promotes specific training and job orientation programmes for persons with disabilities, with the aim of improving their professional skills and competences.

G. **Protection in the event of dismissal:**

Protective measures are established in case of dismissal of workers with disabilities, in order to avoid unjustified discrimination.

H. **Positive Actions:**

The legislation includes provisions for positive action to promote equal opportunities, ensuring that persons with disabilities have equal access to training, employment, and other social domains.

2. **Special Employment Centres (CEE):** These centres are companies whose primarily goal is to offer paid employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. They operate across various sectors and provide working environments tailored to the specific needs of their employees.
3. **Reasonable accommodation:** Encouraging reasonable accommodation in the work environment enables full participation of persons with disabilities. These adjustments may include adapting facilities, work tools, and offering flexible working hours, among other measures.
4. **Education and training programmes:** Specific education and training programmes are promoted for persons with disabilities, with the aim of improving their professional skills and competences and facilitating their access to the labour market.
5. **Job counselling and guidance:** Specialised job counselling and guidance services are available for persons with disabilities. These services provide them support in job search, help them to identify job opportunities, and offer guidance on career choices.
6. **Awareness-raising and sensitisation:** Awareness-raising campaigns are carried out targeting employers, co-workers and society in general to promote an inclusive and respectful working environment.
7. **Collaboration with social entities:** Collaboration between companies and social entities dedicated to the inclusion of people with disabilities is essential. These entities can facilitate contact between employers and candidates, offer support during the integration process and provide follow-up in the workplace.
8. **Access to assistive technologies:** Access to assistive technologies that facilitate the performance of work tasks, such as specialised software, assistive devices, and other adaptive tools, is encouraged.

➢ ***DATA FROM SLOVENIA***

Since 1991, Slovenia has integrated the principle of equal opportunities into its disability protection development strategy. This principle serves as the fundamental basis for employment policy, aiming to implement equal opportunities despite the challenging position of persons with disabilities on the labour market. In Slovenia, there is not a single reliable and comparable database for assessing the employment status of blind and partially sighted persons on the labour market. According to estimates, in Slovenia, there are between 8,000 and 10,000 blind and partially sighted persons. A visually impaired person is defined as any person with less than 30% residual vision, even with correction in their better eye. On December 31, 2023, only 3,481 blind and partially sighted persons were registered in the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Slovenia. Due to voluntary membership, regional associations of blind and partially sighted people are experiencing a decline in participation from young or working-age population. The data collected by local associations relies on timeliness and accuracy provided by their members.

The status of a person with disability in Slovenia is regulated by two laws, that is, the Pension and Disability Insurance Act and the Employment Rehabilitation Act. At the national level, there is data on the number of all persons with disabilities in the country, and the number of unemployed persons with disabilities registered in the records of the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia is also available.

Slovenia has a population of 2.1 million, of which the share of persons with disabilities is 12-13%. Among all employees, less than 4% are persons with disabilities. According to the records of the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia, there were 8,719 jobseekers with disabilities in 2023. This group constitutes 16.3% of all registered unemployed persons (Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023). Regrettably, there is no centralized registry that categorizes data on persons with disabilities based on disability type and employment status. Consequently, we were unable to access specific information regarding the number of blind and partially sighted persons among the job seekers and those who are employed.

The Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Pension Fund of the Republic of Slovenia oversees and promotes the employment of persons with disabilities through a quota system. This quota specifies the percentage of persons with disabilities that employers are obligated to hire.

The quota ranges from 2 to 6 percent of all employees employed by the employer. Employers with a workforce of at least 20 employees (excluding statutory exceptions) are obligated to meet the quota. Employers have various methods to fulfil this requirement, as listed below:

- By employing the prescribed number of persons with disabilities

- By contributing 70 percent of the minimum wage for each person with disabilities they would otherwise be required to employ.

- By replacing the quota by establishing a contract for suitable business collaboration with a Company that predominantly employs PWDs or an employment centre, where work expenses equivalent to at least 15 times the minimum wage per year are acknowledged for each person with disability that the employer is required to employ within the specified quota.

Employers who employ persons with disabilities receive certain incentives, namely:

- **Reward for exceeding the quota**: If the employer is obliged to meet the quota according to the quota system or exceeds the quota, he receives a reward in the amount of 20% of the minimum wage for each person with disability employed above the quota

- **Exemption from payment of contribution for pension and disability insurance** for every employee with disabilities

- **Wage subsidy for a person with a disability:** A PWD employed in a protected workplace, in supportive employment, or in a disabled company and who achieves lower work performance as a result of the disability is entitled to a wage subsidy. The basis for calculating the amount of the subsidy is the minimum wage, and the amount depends on the work performance. In protective employment, it amounts to 40 to 70 percent of the minimum wage,

and from 10 to 30 percent of the minimum wage in supportive employment or a disabled company.

- **Payment of the costs of adapting the workplace:** The employer can request the payment for suitable adaptation of the workplace and work-related tools based on a prepared individual adaptation plan. This plan ensures that a person with a disability can only be employed in a workplace specifically adapted for him/her or that he/she has the necessary accommodations to perform his/her job tasks.

- **Payment of the costs of support services:** Employers who have entered into a support employment contract with a person with a disability and have developed a plan outlining the necessary support services can apply for reimbursement of support service costs, up to a maximum of 30 hours per month. This payment is intended to cover part of the salary for the employees who assist and support the person with a disability in the workplace.

According to the Annual Report for 2021, employers employed 35,406 persons with disabilities through the quota system, which represents 3.83% of employed persons with disabilities compared to the total number of employees in these companies fulfilling the quota system (Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Pension Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, 2021). Despite many incentives and benefits that employers receive for employing persons with disabilities, Companies registered as companies that employ primarily persons with disabilities are predominantly those that play a key role in solving the problem of unemployment of persons with disabilities. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (2023) states that according to the latest data, approximately 11,600 persons with disabilities of working age are employed in 158 disabled companies, with an increase of 1.2% compared to 2021. According to statistical data, the vast majority of unemployed persons with disabilities are over 55 years old and have a lower level of education, which makes it even more difficult for them to find employment.

Through the analysis of the available statistical data, our objective is to enhance societal awareness regarding challenges faced by the most vulnerable groups. Subsequent sections of this handbook will explore the resources and tools available to individuals with disabilities, with a particular

focus on visually impaired. These tools aim to aid their integration into the demanding employment sector.[4]

- [4] Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSZ):(2023) “Labour Market, Monthly Data December 2023”: https://www.ess.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/Trg_dela/Dokumenti_TD/Mesecne_informacije/MI_2023_12.pdf
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURS) :(2024) “Work of the Active Population, January 2024”: https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/news/Index/12740
- Radio Television Slovenia (RTV SLO). (2023): https://www.rtvslo.si/dostopno/delez-invalidov-med-zaposlenimi-v-sloveniji-je-zgolj-4-odstoten/661004
- Public scholarship, development, disability and Pension fund of the Republic of Slovenia. Annual Report 2021: https://www.sripsrs.si/storage/app/media/dokumenti/LP_in_PFN/Letno%20porocilo%202021_splet.pdf

- European Data from the ***"Report on the Situation of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons in Relation to Employment in Europe ten Years after the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities"***

In this initial chapter, we have presented in general the state of play regarding employment of persons with disabilities. Moreover, we have pointed out the challenges related to the limited databases available for this group, and the lack of data disaggregated by type of disability, age, sex, level of education, etc. As you are aware, the goal of this Handbook is to enhance the employability of persons with visual impairments. To that end, we reference the findings presented in the European Blind Union (EBU) report. This report considers the employment strategies each country employs to improve the conditions of blind and partially sighted persons. It also evaluates the extent to which the proposals and recommendations set forth by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are being adhered to.

The right to work is a fundamental human right. It is essential to the realisation of other human rights and constitutes an inseparable and inherent part of human dignity. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in Article 27, guarantees the right to work for persons with disabilities and sets out the legal framework for the obligations of States Parties in relation to the work and employment of persons with disabilities.

States Parties to the Convention recognise this right and must take appropriate measures to safeguard and promote its realisation. Considering the process followed for the elaboration of the study, it has become evident that there is a lack of specific data regarding visually impaired persons and the right to work and employment in the different European countries. Similarly, the difficulties experienced by the organisations in participating in the elaboration of the report, due precisely to the lack of information, resources, and organisational capacity, have been evident. Furthermore, from the information provided by the organisations of visually impaired

persons, it is clear that some actions and policies are still being promoted that are not in line with the general recommendations issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For example, we see that permanent and specific programmes are developed for persons with visual impairment, instead of promoting actions to include persons with disabilities in regular programmes, or how certain jobs are classified to be performed specifically by persons with visual impairment. Some States Parties report on a **welfare approach to** national reporting, and there is often a lot of talk about getting a job in terms of whether persons with disabilities have the skills and abilities to do a job, rather than the barriers they face in getting a job. Systems are identified in which persons with certain categories of disability are effectively limited to performing certain occupations or manufacturing certain items, and these systems constitute a violation of the right to employment. Terminology and classifications such as being 'fit for work' or registering as a 'person with reduced capacity for work' are very common and **the sheltered employment model is widespread**, so the degree of inclusion in the mainstream labour market remains very low. It is estimated that there are more than **30 million blind and partially sighted persons** living across geographical Europe. On average, 1 in 30 Europeans experience vision loss, and the number of visually impaired persons is four times the number of persons who are totally blind. **The average unemployment rate** of blind and partially sighted persons of working age is **over 75%**, and more women than men are unemployed. It shows that **the social model of disability is not yet a reality in Europe**, and that the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the realisation of human rights in the field of employment in the European Union are unfinished business.

The medical model of disability, which contradicts the Convention, is often **used to assess persons' ability to work**.

There is insufficient comprehensive data on the state of play regarding employment of persons with disabilities, and particularly the situation in the private sector. Unemployment particularly affects persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities. There is a need to collect statistical data on the employment rate and persons with disabilities, disaggregated by sex, age, type of disability, employment, and salary.

Regarding the **protection of the rights of blind and partially sighted persons,** in some countries, technical and specific measures have been put in place in transport and in cities to facilitate accessibility and personal mobility. Access to cultural services and the availability of official information for the visually impaired are also promoted. Measures have been taken to ensure the accessibility of public services and public transport systems, as well as to ensure the accessibility of environments, in line with universal design principles. In most countries guide dogs are allowed access to public transport and have free access to public spaces.

Organisations of persons with disabilities often provide rehabilitation, counselling, and mobility services. In Austria, social benefit laws provide for the payment of monthly cash benefits both to cover the additional costs of disability and to ensure a minimum income guarantee. In addition, there are measures providing for preferential access to vacant positions.

In Serbia, blind persons with insurance are entitled to typhlotechnical aids; meanwhile, in Spain, ONCE makes available to its members its Employment Support Service in 22 centres located throughout the country. This service is responsible for promoting the socio-labour inclusion of ONCE members and for supporting them in maintaining their jobs. These services are offered free of charge to both employers and ONCE members. The ONCE Social Group employs a total of 68,467 workers, of whom 38,780, 57%, are persons with disabilities.

In Montenegro, legislation has been put in place to ensure indirect protection of persons with disabilities; workers caring for persons with severe disabilities are entitled to part-time work, which is considered full-time work as far as the exercise of labour rights is concerned.

In relation to **labour and trade union rights,** in general there are no specific measures for persons with disabilities and workers with disabilities are members of trade unions on an equal footing with other workers. In some cases, some positive measures are specified, although this is not the norm, for example in Flanders (Belgium), where trade unions are supported to recruit diversity advisors to carry out awareness raising projects on the proportionate participation of groups at risk of exclusion from the labour

market, targeting trade union leaders, staff and representatives in workplaces and organisations. Workers with disabilities in sheltered workshops are often not seen as having the same rights as other workers in relation to decision making and
participation.

Concerning **effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and further training,** visually impaired persons make use of vocational training guidance services mainly in the following areas: labour code (employment contracts; agreements, requirements and conditions in relation to overtime; options for termination of contract; registration at the offices of official employment services; options for work that are compatible with the receipt of disability benefits); preparation of curriculum vitae and writing of cover letter; where to look for job offers, etc....
Furthermore, vocational training guidance services are also involved in the acquisition of adapted equipment, and more specifically in how this equipment can help the person in the performance of the job. Another related area is training in autonomy and in orientation and mobility.
In several countries, there are programmes that provide subsidies to promote self-employment for persons with disabilities who do not have the financial resources to do so. In general, subsidies are used to cover the purchase of machinery and other equipment, raw materials and working capital. According to information from Germany, young persons with disabilities, and in particular young women with disabilities, face significant limitations in their choice of vocational training programmes.
In Spain, supported employment, i.e., the various guidance measures and personal assistance programmes in the workplace, is ensured by specialised technicians whose task is to facilitate the social and work-related adjustments needed by persons with disabilities who have greater difficulties in accessing the open labour market.

In some countries, e.g., the Czech Republic, financial support is offered to persons with disabilities who choose to be self-employed, while in Austria the turnover of businesses run by blind persons is exempt from VAT under the

provisions of the Value Added Tax Act. Another option promoted in countries such as Belgium is teleworking.

Employment offices provide counselling and guidance services, but they are often considered deficient. In Cyprus, counsellors in the Employment Department receive specific training to be able to deal with vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, but in general, as the information received from Germany points out, excessively long delays in granting assistance and access to assistive technologies constitute an unnecessary burden for persons with disabilities.

In Italy, all public offices and private companies with a switchboard with five or more lines are obliged to employ a visually impaired telephonist. Public offices with more than one telephonist position have to reserve at least 51% of all positions for visually impaired persons.

In relation to **public sector employment**, most countries have put in place quota systems or procedures to comply with the law by procuring certain quantities of goods and services from companies with more than 50% of workers with disabilities.

Although employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector is regulated by law, persons with disabilities find employment mainly in NGOs, while most public companies prefer to pay the penalty for not hiring the established number of persons with disabilities.

To fill vacant positions, public sector employers are obliged to give persons with disabilities who have difficulties in finding a job in the regular labour market preferential access to the position if, in the opinion of the employer, the PWD has the same qualifications as other applicants.

In some countries, such as Denmark, the Ministry of Defence is exempted from the prohibition of differential treatment and discrimination on grounds of age and disability. Cyprus and the United Kingdom have also entered reservations to the Convention in this regard.

In terms of **private sector employment and affirmative action and programmes, incentives and other measures**, there are subsidies for employers who hire persons with disabilities, as well as compulsory job reservation schemes. In some cases, companies are encouraged to employ

persons with disabilities in the open labour market by means of rebates in personal income tax systems. Subsidies are also offered to promote integration, to cover wage costs, to safeguard the job, for costs associated with wages and training, and subsidies for the adaptation of workplaces through the removal of barriers.

In many places, projects and organisations exist for the inclusion of workers with disabilities in the mainstream labour market, and private and public entities that fail to comply with their legal obligations are subject to administrative sanctions, with the proceeds sometimes being allocated to special funds to promote the employment of persons with disabilities.

However, sanctions are often not applied.

Many persons with disabilities are employed in the sheltered sector, but the information that has been collected does not generally indicate whether they are visually impaired. Workers in these centres have fixed working hours, during which they produce goods or provide services, but their work is not classified as paid work. In addition, many such workplaces operate as subcontractors to other companies in the unprotected sector.

In general, these workshops offer the opportunity to work to persons who, because of the type or severity of their disability, cannot work in the open labour market. The law states that the workshops should prepare workers for the regular market, but the big problem is that only a very small percentage of the workers successfully make the transition to the open market. Wages are generally significantly below the minimum wage, and, in some cases, workers' trade union rights are not recognised.

In Hungary, the National Employment Foundation has developed and supported transition models aimed at achieving mobilisation towards the open market, improving opportunities for jobseekers, and raising the interest of employers. The Foundation developed the programme 'Encouraging Employer Recruitment and Supporting Employees with Modified Work Skills'. The programme sought to explore secondary stimulus elements (not based on state subsidies) that could convince open market actors of the advantages of hiring persons with modified work ability.

Reasonable accommodation is a rather ambiguous issue in the legal systems of European countries, and a rather unknown topic for employers. In general, policies in this area include initiatives to ensure reasonable

accommodation in workplaces, measures to adapt workplaces and working conditions, support to compensate for the difference caused by reduced work efficiency, co-financing of personal assistance costs (an assistant at the workplace), co-financing of loan interest, and co-financing of occupational therapy costs. Support measures are also available for the reimbursement of local and door-to-door travel costs related to travelling to work and for the acquisition of work experience.

In terms of gaining **experience in the open labour market**, there are many projects and many organisations whose purpose is to promote the inclusion of workers with disabilities in the mainstream labour market, such as the training centre of the Austrian Federation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SEBUS), which offers vocational training and assistance with job applications and job interviews. In Sweden, employers who are signatories to the collective agreement with the trade unions in their field can participate in the placement programme, which allows the employer to meet the worker with disabilities and train him/her in each job task, thus enabling the unemployed person with a disability to gain experience and learn on the job.

In some countries, supported employment is not covered by existing legislation. Experience in general shows that visually impaired persons have employment opportunities in the social and ICT fields, mainly in the non-profit sector and in NGOs. Persons with visual impairment, with higher levels of education and better qualifications have more opportunities; fortunately, the legal sector is a good example of this, as there are many lawyers with visual impairment working in the sector, as well as teachers with visual impairment in education.

In relation to **vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return to work programmes**, in Denmark and during rehabilitation processes following a work plan, the person receives a rehabilitation allowance which is equal to the higher amount of the daily allowance. In other cases, the employer receives a higher subsidy for the creation of sheltered jobs and sheltered workshops if he hires persons with more severe disabilities. The transition from sheltered employment to the open labour market is very difficult. In Austria, in the field of social insurance the motto is 'rehabilitation before pension'.

In Montenegro and according to the legislation in force, the Employment Office of Montenegro established the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities. The resources of the Fund come from special contributions paid by employers which are part of the Montenegrin budget.

Thus, in order to improve the situation, EBU member organisations have implemented some actions that the EBU has considered as examples of **best practice**. Some of these measures are outlined below:

- In the UK, a comprehensive employment assessment tool was developed that considers the specific needs of visually impaired jobseekers. The tool aims to support employment advisors and their clients in designing interventions to help clients on their employment journey.
- In France, a system of reserved places is put in place, and funds for the employment of persons with disabilities are used, which are financed by penalties imposed on employers and invested in improving accessibility conditions and promoting reasonable accommodation measures.
- Also in France, a disability compensation allowance is available which, regardless of the income of the person or his or her family, compensates for the additional expenses associated with the disability.
- ESATs are not 'normal French companies' according to employment legislation, but are part of the 'protected sector', offering assistance and promoting social reintegration. Support activities are offered to persons with disabilities, who do not have the same official status as other 'employees' (they cannot join a trade union and receive a salary of between 5% and 35% of the minimum wage [SMIC], supplemented by 'workplace assistance' paid by the state).
- The Adapted Companies in France are real companies operating in the 'ordinary sector' where employees enjoy the same rights as other workers.
- There are training centres for persons who become visually impaired as adults. Adaptation courses are provided which, if necessary, enable them to learn Braille, mobility training, and to learn or update their skills in the use of typhlotechnical aids.

The cost of the CPRs is financed from the social security system, which also pays the students' accommodation costs.

- In Germany, the Inclusive Education without Barriers (iBoB) programme facilitates inclusive lifelong learning for blind and partially sighted professionals. The main tool of the project is its website. The programme offers guidance and information and presents inclusive lifelong learning courses. iBoB is based on the mentoring approach.
- In Italy, the Regional Government of Lazio has developed a programme that aims to create almost 300 internship opportunities in companies for people with disabilities. The Italian Union of Blind and Visually Impaired Persons identified suitable blind and visually impaired persons in the region and contacted them and found companies where they could do internships. The project has had a positive impact on the awareness of employers in the region.
-The Blind Union of Montenegro has created a portal called zaposliosi.me (employed.me), which aims to connect and ensure smooth communication between employers and job seekers with disabilities.
- The Spanish regulatory framework and the employment services made available to severely visually impaired citizens at state level (ONCE affiliates) include an internal and specialised service called 'Employment Support Service' which offers, among others, an employment guidance and inclusion programme, an employment training programme, and a self-employment support programme.

In relation to the Concluding Observations, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has highlighted the following measures as **positive actions** by the different European countries in the field of employment to be taken into account:
- The efforts made by States parties to adapt their legal systems to the provisions of the Convention, as well as the policies and measures adopted to ensure the realisation of the employment rights of persons with disabilities as set out in the Convention. The Committee notes the adoption of national plans for the promotion of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, including employment-related measures.
- Prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment through legislation, as well as recognising that the denial of reasonable accommodation constitutes discriminatory treatment.

- The extension of the obligations relating to reserved places for persons with disabilities.
- Providing reasonable accommodation and creating more opportunities for inclusion in the mainstream labour market, with the aim of promoting full and productive employment of persons with disabilities.

If we consider the **concerns highlighted** in the concluding remarks, we see that they broadly coincide with those emerging from the analysis of the overall data.

Firstly, there are accessibility issues, such as the content and number of accessibility standards that apply in, among others, the built environment, ICT, transport, and information systems in rural and urban areas, which is one of the most worrying issues in terms of employment opportunities.

Another issue of concern is the persistence of negative attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices surrounding persons with disabilities, as they are often seen as unfit for work and incapable of performing tasks. The Committee highlights the high unemployment rates among persons with disabilities, which are even higher for women with disabilities, and highlights the existing wage gap experienced by women with disabilities.

The Committee regrets the lack of disaggregated data on persons with disabilities, as there is very little data on persons with disabilities in relation to employment, and even less for persons with visual impairment.

One of the major issues of concern that recurs in different European countries is the large number of people working in sheltered workshops, outside the open market and earning very low wages.

The number of persons with disabilities employed in regular jobs is small. Another cause for concern is the fact that employers prefer to pay penalties rather than comply with the statutory quota requirements. In Belgium, for instance, there is no reservation of workplaces in the private sector. Affirmative action measures and the provision of reasonable accommodation are insufficient to ensure that persons with disabilities can access employment in the open labour market, despite obligations under EU Directive 2000/78/EC on non-discrimination in employment.

Many of the Committee's **recommendations** relate to economic and regulatory policies that should effectively generate an open and inclusive

labour market in line with the Convention. Recommendations have been issued in favour of eliminating discrimination in access to the labour market for persons with more severe disabilities, as well as recommendations that aim to encourage the use of support measures and adjustments to achieve inclusive employment. Other recommendations:

- Collect data on the employment of persons with disabilities disaggregated by gender, age, and type of disability, as well as data on the accessibility of mainstream labour market workplaces.
- Repeal any legislation that restricts, on the basis of disability, the right of persons with disabilities to exercise any profession and ensure equal pay for work of equal value for all persons with disabilities, regardless of their degree of disability.
- Reform work capacity assessment systems, in order to eradicate the medicalised approach and to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstream labour market.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy effective protection against discrimination, as well as access to vocational training, appropriate levels of accessibility, and reasonable accommodation.
- Promote legislative measures that provide for effective sanctions for employers who refuse to provide reasonable accommodation in the workplace.
- Implement measures to reduce the employment gap and the gender pay gap.
- Increase significantly and as soon as possible the percentage of people with disabilities working in the open labour market. To this end, all necessary regulatory measures must be taken, and incentives promoted to ensure the right of persons with disabilities to work in the open labour market, both in the private and public sector and in the education and vocational training systems.
- Ensure full accessibility for persons with disabilities to all workplaces, educational and vocational training centres.
- Create employment opportunities in accessible workplaces, in particular for women with disabilities.

- Complement quota systems with other measures to encourage employers to hire persons with disabilities. Disincentives to employment of persons with disabilities need to be analysed and overcome.
- Develop and implement, in cooperation with organisations of persons with disabilities, an action plan to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market.
- Regulate and monitor reasonable accommodation, including employment with support through personal assistance, as well as accessibility of workplaces.
- Gradually eliminate sheltered workshops by developing immediately applicable strategies for their elimination with deadlines and incentives to encourage the private and public sector to hire persons with disabilities in the open labour market. Also strengthen measures to support the transition of all persons with disabilities currently working in sheltered workshops to formal employment in the open labour market, in accordance with the Convention.
- Promote in practice the right of persons with disabilities to form trade unions.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities do not suffer cuts in their social protection and pension insurance because they have worked in sheltered workshops.
- Promote corporate social responsibility in relation to the employment of persons with disabilities[5].

[5] European Blind Union. (2021). "Report on the Situation of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons in Relation to Employment in Europe ten Years after the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities": https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/once_ebu_employment_report_en.pdf

CHAPTER 2: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET

Now that we are familiarised with the data on the state of play regarding employment of persons with disabilities in the EU member states of the project consortium and some other European countries, we will compile a series of resources to enhance their employability and increase their options for labour market insertion.

It is therefore essential to get to know the tools and techniques to be used to access the labour market. We are going to list those that we consider crucial for anyone actively seeking employment, taking into account the particularities of the group of persons with visual impairment to whom this handbook is addressed.

➢ ***INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES***

Employment services play a crucial role for kick-starting an effective job search by offering resources, support, and guidance. Moreover, they enhance individuals' employability and contribute to fortifying the labour market. These services encompass actions such as:

- **Information and guidance**: Employment services provide information on the labour market, job opportunities, sector trends, and skills in demand. They also offer guidance on how to write an effective CV, prepare for interviews, and improve professional skills.
- **Job brokering**: They facilitate the connection between employers and job seekers by offering intermediary services. This may include posting job vacancies, organizing job fairs, conducting job interviews, and referring suitable candidates to companies.
- **Education and training**: Many employment services offer education and training programmes to improve the skills and employability of job seekers. These programmes may include vocational training courses, soft skills workshops, and retraining programmes to adapt to the changing needs of the labour market.

- **Financial support**: In some cases, employment services may provide financial support to jobseekers through unemployment benefits, training allowances, or income support to ease the transition to employment.
- Personalised counselling: Employment services often offer personalized counselling and individualised follow-up to job **seekers.** This may include skills assessment, development of personalised career plans, and monitoring of job search progress.

In Croatia, employment services are structured in several institutions and agencies that work together to address employment and unemployment needs in the country. The main institution responsible for coordinating and managing these services is the Croatian Employment Service (Hrvatski Zavod za Zapošljavanje, HZZ). Here is the
basic structure of employment services in Croatia:

1. **Croatian Employment Service (HZZ)**:
    - It is the national agency responsible for administering and coordinating employment services throughout the country.
    - It manages regional and local offices that provide direct services to the unemployed and employers.
    - It provides a variety of services, including unemployment registration, job search, training, and education programmes, unemployment benefits, and support services.
2. **HZZ regional and local offices**:
    - These offices are located in different regions and cities of Croatia.
    - They provide direct services to the unemployed and employers in their respective areas.
    - They deal with unemployment registration, job counselling, job placement, training programmes, and other employment-related services.

3. **Institute for Expert Assessments, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (ZOSI)**

- The Institute for Expert Assessments, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Employment of Persons with Disabilities is competent for the development and improvement of vocational rehabilitation areas.
- Vocational rehabilitation measures and activities are services that are carried out to train a person with a disability for a suitable job, to get a job, that is, to keep a job and progress in it, and to develop professionally.
- For the services of vocational rehabilitation in the Republic of Croatia, the competent providers are regional vocational rehabilitation centres in Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka, and Split.
- The vocational rehabilitation service standards include 12 specifically designed vocational rehabilitation services, and the method of their implementation is defined.
- These services are as follows:

1. Rehabilitation evaluation of workability, knowledge, work habits, and professional interests
2. Assistance in overcoming various difficulties hindering inclusion into further vocational rehabilitation services
3. Perspective compilation
4. Workplace and work environment analysis
5. Professional support and monitoring during education and training or upskilling programmes with shorter duration
6. Professional support and monitoring in the workplace and the work environment
7. Strengthening work potential and professional competences - Work Centre
8. Strengthening work potential and professional competences - Virtual workshop
9. Creating an adaptation plan for the workplace and the work environment, as well as performing the required adaptations to equipment and means of work
10. Evaluation of work effectiveness.
11. Occupation-specific training related to a concrete workplace
12. Education, training, and upskilling programmes with a shorter duration.

4. **Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy**:
    - It is the main government body responsible for formulating employment and social protection policies in Croatia.
    - It works in collaboration with the HZZ and other relevant agencies to develop and implement labour policies and employment programmes.
5. **Other government agencies**:
    - Various government agencies may be involved in the provision of employment services in specific areas, such as education and vocational training, social services, and economic development.
6. **Employers' associations and trade unions**:
    - Employers' associations and trade unions play an important role in formulating labour policies and promoting good labour practices.
    - They can collaborate with the government and the HZZ in the creation of employment, training, and skills development programmes.

In summary, the structure of employment services in Croatia involves coordination between the Croatian Employment Service, relevant government authorities, regional and local agencies, and the Institute for Expert Assessments, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, as well as private sector stakeholders and trade unions to address employment and unemployment needs in the country.

Considering the variety of civil society organisations, in particular, those representing persons with disabilities in general, or a certain type of disability, it is important to mention their efforts in enhancing the employability of their members. Many NGOs carry out a wide range of activities and projects, tackling specific challenges of their target groups to increase their employability and improve their skills. They often provide advice and support in the area of employment and collaborate with other public and private institutions, organizing campaigns and creating new opportunities for their target groups to meet potential employers and improve their presentation and communication skills.

In Spain, employment services are mainly structured at two levels: the national level, led by the Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal (SEPE), and the autonomous level, where each autonomous community may have its employment services.

1. **State Public Employment Service (SEPE)**
    - It is an autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy.
    - Its main function is the management of active employment policies, as well as the administration of unemployment benefits and other employment-related assistance at the national level.
    - It offers labour intermediation services, information and labour guidance, vocational training, and management of unemployment benefits.
2. **Regional employment services**
    - Each of the 17 autonomous communities may have its employment service, although the structure and name may vary from region to region.
    - These regional services complement the work of the SEPE at the regional level and adapt employment policies to the specific needs of each autonomous community.
    - Their functions usually include labour intermediation, employment promotion, vocational training, and support to local employment programmes.

In addition to these main structures, there are also other employment-related institutions and bodies in Spain, such as trade unions and employers' associations, which are involved in labour policymaking and can provide advisory and support services to workers and employers.

In summary, the structure of employment services in Spain is organised on two levels: the national level, represented by the SEPE, and the autonomous level, where each autonomous community can have its employment services adapted to its specific needs.

The SEPE offers a range of services to both employers and unemployed workers, including:

1. Labour intermediation: Facilitates the placement of unemployed people in jobs suited to their skills and experience, as well as helping companies to find candidates for their vacancies.
2. Labour information and guidance: Provides information on the labour market, employment opportunities, vocational training, employment programmes, and other work-related issues.
3. Vocational training: Offers training and retraining programmes to improve the skills and employability of unemployed workers.
4. Unemployment benefits: Manages the payment of economic benefits to unemployed workers who meet certain requirements, such as having paid sufficient Social Security contributions.

In Slovenia, employment services are mainly run by the Employment Institute of Slovenia (Zavod Republike Slovenije za Zaposlovanje, ZRSZ). Here is an overview of how these services work and their structure:

1. **Employment Institute of Slovenia (ZRSZ)**:
    - It is the national agency responsible for administering and coordinating employment services throughout the country.
    - It provides a wide range of employment-related services for both the unemployed and employers.
    - Its main mission is to facilitate the placement of unemployed people in suitable jobs and to support the development of the labour market.
2. **ZRSZ regional and local offices**:
    - The ZRSZ operates through a network of regional and local offices throughout Slovenia.
    - These offices provide direct services to the unemployed and employers in their respective areas.
    - They offer services such as unemployment registration, career guidance, job search counselling, training and education programmes, and unemployment benefits.

3. **Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**:
    - It is the main government body responsible for formulating employment, social affairs, and labour protection policies in Slovenia.
    - It works closely with the ZRSZ and other relevant government agencies to develop effective labour and social policies.
4. **Other government agencies and related organizations**:
    - Various government agencies may be involved in the provision of services related to employment, vocational training, education, and economic development.
    - Non-governmental organizations and other institutions can collaborate with the government and the ZRSZ in the implementation of programmes and projects related to employment and skills development.
5. **Employers' associations and trade unions**:
    - Employers' associations and trade unions play an important role in social dialogue and labour policymaking in Slovenia.
    - They collaborate with the government and the ZRSZ in promoting fair working conditions, improving employability, and creating employment opportunities.

In short, employment services in Slovenia are organized through the Employment Institute of Slovenia, which works in partnership with various government agencies, organizations, and stakeholders from the private and trade union sectors to address employment and unemployment needs in the country.

As in Croatia also in Slovenia, it is necessary to mention a valid contribution of representative disability organisations that act as NGOs and other stakeholders that encourage the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market. Each of these organizations raises the public awareness of the specificity of individual types of disabilities, and on the other hand, encourages the claim for adaptations that persons with individual types of disabilities need to perform equally in their workplaces. An important contribution to the employment of persons with disabilities is also made by the quota system, which obliges employers to employ a certain proportion of people with disabilities, while also offering incentives such as a reward for exceeding the quota, exemption from contributions for pension, and disability insurance, wage subsidy, payment of the costs of adjusting the workplace and payment of support services costs. Nevertheless, in Slovenia, special companies that employ persons with disabilities play a key role in the employment of PWDs in general. The problem is that these companies often perform simple manual work with very low added value and thus do not offer a stimulating environment for developing the potential of educated or highly educated individuals.

➢ ***GUIDANCE SERVICES***

One of the most effective resources for job seekers is career guidance services. For persons with disabilities, professional support during the job search process is often essential.

This type of service can be linked to the state public employment services themselves, or to entities/organisations that cater to unemployed people, and in particular unemployed persons with disabilities.

Receiving support from a career guidance professional can significantly enhance employment prospects for actively job-seeking individuals. These professionals collaborate with the beneficiary to create a personalized integration plans that enhance both personal and professional skills. By designing a customized path, they improve their employability. Moreover, these experts are well-versed in the most suitable resources and tools for accessing the job market., In some cases, career guidance services even

facilitate direct interaction with companies, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful job placement for those seek assistance.

Within career guidance services for persons with disabilities, experts possess the essential knowledge and experience to offer tailored support to those seeking their services. They adeptly adapt to unique characteristics and situations of each person and the specific disability they present.

Thanks to guidance professionals, it is possible to access information about the labour market, receive support, and obtain advice during the job search. These resources are tailored to each individual, helping with employment opportunities and resource management. Guidance counsellors can effectively manage the resources described below, streamlining the process of entering the labour market.

➢***PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF CVS TO COMPANIES***

When seeking employment, it is essential to have a presentation tool that succinctly summarizes both our personal and professional information as candidates. To fulfil this purpose, we utilize the Curriculum Vitae (CV), a term derived from Latin, which, in one of its translations, signifies 'course of one's life'.

There is a great variety of models for preparing curricula, and there is no standard that establishes which one is the best. There are a series of basic criteria for the elaboration of a curriculum vitae, which we will list and define:

1. It should be **clear enough**, allowing employers to quickly grasp essential information. Since employers often avoid reading CVs longer than two pages, it is crucial to maximise efficiency. Therefore, it is recommended to create a well-organized CV with an original design.

2. **Elevator pitch:**

   An elevator pitch should be about 30 seconds long – the time it takes people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. That means no rambling, and no unnecessary information – just the most important details.

> The elevator pitch tells people in a brief moment who you are, what sets you apart, and where you want to be. You usually write it in the CV, after your personal details. The text can be in a box and centred. It is your selling proposition, your advertisement. Think it through carefully and always remember to adapt it to a particular job posting.

The order of the contents is not very relevant either; in most cases, CV starts with the personal details and then, after the elevator pitch, we recommend listing professional experience. There are two primary reasons for this approach. Firstly, during the job selection process, experience in the advertised position or similar roles holds significant value. In some cases, specific competencies can only be acquired through work experience. Secondly, when considering profiles of individuals with disabilities, candidates with limited qualifications and basic educational backgrounds are often encountered. In such cases, it is advisable to prioritize their practical experience over educational gaps. After collecting personal data and work experience, proceed to include academic and complementary training details. These should specify the title of the education or training, the year it was completed, the institution providing it, and the total number of hours.

In some countries, such as Spain, a section called "occupations sought" can also be found in the curriculum of a PWD. The purpose of this section is to make it easier for the person making the selection to know what type of positions and functions the candidate can perform, as in many cases the experience that appears in the CV cannot be carried out at present, due to an illness or accident, which has led to the acquisition of a disability, limiting their functions in the performance of the occupation they have been carrying out until this date. For example, a very common case is a man whose professional career has been in the field of construction, after suffering an illness or accident, is left with a series of sequelae that limit or prevent him from carrying out this occupation, but he is competent to carry out other occupations. Therefore, in the section on occupations requested, he can state which jobs he can carry out and what his skills are.

CV TEMPLATE[6]

PERSONAL DATA

Rita Shaw

Born on 4 March 1991

Verde Street 347, 50100 Florence (IT)

(0039) 0552781762

rita.shaw@gmail.com

recent graduate with internship abroad interested in working as an administrative assistant. I am a dedicated worker, eager to contribute to the achievement of the company's objectives and willing to take on responsible tasks.

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

February 2014: University of Bologna (IT), Department of Economics,

Business Studies and Statistics

Degree in Business Administration and Economics, 105/110

Subjects studied: microeconomics, management principles, macroeconomics, legislative principles, commercial law, accounting, computational tools, market techniques, financial analysis, statistics, business strategies.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

March 2014 - March 2016: junior assistant in salary management and customer service.

- SEMA COPIES, Amarilla Street 46, 40100 Bologna (IT)

- Observing payroll activities for more than 250 employees and sending out cheques before the end of each month.

- Answering calls (60/day on average) helping to solve customer and IT department problems both from customers and the billing department

[6] European Blind Union. (2021). "Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment": https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/ebu_manual_for_inexperienced_job_seekers_with_a_visual_impairment.pdf

- Assisting in the analysis of all company data entry systems and preparing recommendations for the overall system

July 2013 - December 2013: internship as office assistant

- GAMMA CORPORATIONS, 26 Garden Street, 30012 Liverpool, UK.

- Assisting in scanning documents (100+/day) and registering these documents in the in-house IT system for future use by other internal departments, as well as the company's international offices.

- Assisting daily in writing and distribution of confidential letters to senior management.

- Recording, transcribing, and distributing minutes of meetings.

VOLUNTEERING

2011 - to date: Youth Centre Association, volunteering my services as an accountant:

- Keeping a daily record of income and expenditure.

- Managing the association's accounts

- Preparing financial reports

LANGUAGES

- Fluency in English, First Certificate in English issued by the University of Cambridge in 2013.

- Very good level of spoken and written Spanish acquired during a 9-month Erasmus project at the University of Barcelona in 2012.

INFORMATICS

- ECDL issued by AICA in 2011

CV TEMPLATE[7]

PERSONAL DETAILS

Sona Smith

Born on 5 June 1983

Giardino Square 26, 40100, Bologna (IT)

(0039) 051 3346182

Sona.Smith@gmail.com

2 years' experience as commercial manager and 3 years as administrative assistant, holding a Master's degree in Economics and Business Administration, and with a lot of experience in the use of the SAP system, I would like to put my knowledge and experience to good use in a position as sales manager in an international company.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- July 2014 - to date: Commercial Director Seat SPA, London Street 56, 00187 Roma (IT)

- Organisation and planning of essential central services such as reception, security, mail, as well as day-to-day maintenance

- Responsible for ensuring the correct fulfilment of contracts, insurance coverage and security standards

- In charge of ten employees

- Managing cash loss prevention procedures and establishing security policies.

- Analysing sales figures and forecasting future sales volumes

- Participating in the selection and interviewing of new employees.

- Writing performance reports and evaluating performance based on established indicators.

- November 2011 - July 2014: administrative assistant REDFORD & SONS, Walter Street 75, 20183 Milan (IT)

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[7] European Blind Union. (2021). "Manual for Inexperienced Job Seekers with a Visual Impairment": https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/ebu_manual_for_inexperienced_job_seekers_with_a_visual_impairment.pdf

- Scheduling and coordinating meetings, appointments and travel for supervisors and managers.

- Managing travel and expense reports for team members of the department.

- Training of two administrative assistants during a period of company expansion

- Developing new filing and organisational procedures

- September 2008 - September 2011: secretary BRIGHT SRL, Beverly Street 89, 20018 Milan (IT)

- Responsible for documents such as correspondence, drafts, circulars, and e-mails, and for the preparation of three reports for management on a weekly basis.

- Opening, organising, and distributing messages and correspondence

- Purchasing and maintaining inventories of office supplies, responsible for adhering to budget guidelines

- Recording, transcribing, and distributing minutes of meetings

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

July 2008: University of Bologna, Department of Economics, Business Studies and Statistics

Master in Economics and Business Administration, Business Management

Main subjects studied: accounting and financial reporting, business planning, management and strategies, cost management, accounting management and strategic control, international management.

LANGUAGES

CAE in English issued by the University of Cambridge in 2008.

IT

- High level in SAP FI-CO business administration and accounting modules.

- Expert in Microsoft Office, especially in the use of Excel

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Willingness to travel abroad and within the national territory.

3. Trends in curricula have evolved over time. At times, we discuss "blind" curricula—those without personal data such as age or a photo—with the goal of avoiding discrimination based on age or physical appearance. However, there are other instances when including such data becomes essential. In reality, it is often easier and more effective for the person overseeing the selection process to remember candidates through their photos. In summary, if an individual believes that a photo can enhance their CV, it is advisable to include one, while ensuring that only the person's face is showcased against a neutral background.

The European curriculum, which has gained popularity in recent years, is commonly employed for higher-skilled professions and often cited as a required CV format in a job posting. However, it is less practical for trades and other occupations that do not necessitate advanced qualifications[8].

Therefore, it is recommendable to have a simple CV, with an attractive design and with the characteristics described in the previous paragraphs. And the Europass should be used when addressed in a job posting, or to present our job application in job postings offered by EU institutions.
NOTE: Regardless of which version or format of the CV you choose, it is necessary to ensure that each one is signed by hand.

Let us stop for a moment to reflect: Do we add disability to the curriculum?

It should be a personal decision.
When making this decision, consider factors such as the type of job offer, you are applying for and the company's preferences. If the company explicitly

[8] https://europa.eu/europass/eportfolio/screen/cv-editor?lang=en

targets candidates with disabilities, ensure that this information is prominently displayed on your CV. Recruiters can then quickly identify relevant candidates based on this detail.

However, if the job offer does not explicitly target a specific group, and you wish to emphasize your work experience and qualifications without any other factors influencing the selection process, it is perfectly acceptable to omit any mention of disability on your CV.

Furthermore, it is not essential to specify the type of disability. Doing so can lead to discriminatory situations due to existing prejudices associated with certain disabilities. Consequently, this may hinder opportunities to participate in selection processes. Similarly, disclosing the percentage of disability can also pose challenges. Companies might perceive individuals with a high disability percentage as less suitable for a position, especially when not understanding how the disability impacts their abilities.

➢ ***SELF-CANDIDACY***

To secure employment, it is essential to take proactive steps that enhance the likelihood of finding a job. Occasionally, job offers may fall short of our expectations and requirements. However, rather than passively waiting for the perfect match, consider actively researching companies that align with your interests and have staff profiles similar to yours—even if they are not actively recruiting.

To self-candidate, follow the next steps:

1. **Research: Search** for companies operating in the job area of your interest. Once selected companies of your interest, look for information about the number of employees, headquarters, mission, values of the company, etc.
2. Look for some **contact** details to send them your candidacy. Nowadays, companies have a section on their website named "work with us" or similar. It is advisable to fill in the information requested in this section, which in many cases will also ask you to attach your CV. This may be enough, but if you are very interested in working

for a specific company, look for a way to send your CV and your cover letter to the person in charge of human resources or someone close to them, for example, by trying to find their email address or profile on (professional) social networks such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, etc.

3. Draw up a **cover letter**. This is a document that, together with the CV, provides specific information about your interest in joining the company, highlighting your personal and professional skills, as well as what you can contribute to the company.
4. Create a LinkedIn profile. The LinkedIn application and web page are both accessible to persons with visual impairments, especially those using a screen reader. It is considered as a digital CV, which can "live and grow" if you invest your time and energy to update the information and your success stories and share them with your professional network. It is very user-friendly, and we encourage you to create your professional digital profile and add employees (especially from human resources) of the companies you wish to work for.

➢ ***TAILOR YOUR CV TO DIFFERENT JOB OFFERS***

During the preparation of a general CV, it is essential to gather all personal and professional data that provides a comprehensive overview of the individual submitting the CV. Customizing the CV to match a specific job offer typically occurs when the candidate possesses extensive experience and/or diverse training across various fields. The goal is to emphasize information relevant to the desired position.

➢ ***DRAFTING A COVER LETTER***

A cover letter is a document in which the candidate describes their experience, training, values, and other relevant information. This includes details not fully captured in the CV, such as personal characteristics, interests, and motivations for wanting to join a specific company. While cover letters are commonly used when applying as a self-candidate, they can also be submitted in response to job advertisements, although this practice is less frequent. Some job portals even request a brief cover letter during the registration process for specific job opportunities. When drafting a cover letter for use across Europe, it is essential to keep it concise, professional, and culturally adapted to regional norms. Here is a basic structure you can follow:

1. **Headline:**
    - Include your contact details (full name, address, telephone number and email address) at the top left of the page.
2. **Details of the addressee:**
    - Next, add the details of the company you are addressing. Include the name of the company, the name of the recipient (if known) and the postal address of the company at the top right. You can also add the recipient's title if you know it.
3. **Initial greeting:**
    - Before drafting the core of your letter, you can also add a name of the post you are applying for in the form of a title.
    - Use a formal greeting, such as "Dear [recipient's name]" or "Dear selection team".
4. **Introduction:**
    - In the first part of the letter, introduce who you are and why you are writing. Indicate the position you are applying for and where you saw the job offer. In addition, you can briefly mention your relevant experience or your most important qualifications.

5. **Body of the cover letter:**
    - In this paragraph or paragraphs, highlight your relevant skills, experience and achievements that make you the ideal candidate for the job. You can give specific examples from your previous work that demonstrate your capabilities and how you could contribute to the company's success.
6. **Connection with the company:**
    - Show your interest in the company and explain why you would like to work there. You can mention specific aspects of the company, such as its culture, values or recent projects, and how they fit with your own goals and skills.
7. **Closure:**
    - In the last part of the letter, express your interest in having an interview to discuss further how you could contribute to the team. Thank the recipient for their time and consideration.
8. **Farewell:**
    - Use a formal farewell, such as "Yours sincerely" or "Best regards", followed by your full name.
9. **Signature:**
    - If the letter is to be sent by post, please leave space for your signature after the farewell. If the letter is to be sent by email, your full name will serve as your signature.
10. In addition, **tailor the content** to the specifics of the job and the company to which you are applying.

Remember to review and proofread your cover letter to ensure there are no grammatical or spelling mistakes. More importantly, as a visually impaired person, ask a sighted person to proofread it again.

TEMPLATE COVER LETTER

Employer Contact Information

(Company)
(Address)

Your Contact Information

(Name)
(Address)
(Phone Number)
(Mobile Number)
(Email)

(Date)

Ref: **(Position Title)**

Dear **(Mr/Ms Last Name)**,

I have come across your job vacancy on the **(Website Name)** and I would like to be considered for the position of **(Job Role)**.

As you will see from my CV, I am currently working for **(Company Name)** as the **(Job Role)**. In my present position I am responsible for managing all **(Current Responsibilities)**. I have worked closely with the **(Specific Department)** and have been able to identify problems before they affected deadlines.

I would like to be considered for the position of **(Job Role)**, as I believe I possess the appropriate **(Skill Set)** skills. Over the last year I have implemented **(Specific Project)** throughout the company. This meant **(Details of Project)**, which achieved **(Outcome of Project)**. I successfully achieved **(Personal Achievement)**.

I have the ability to maintain the highest standards whilst reducing costs and I feel that I would be able to make a positive contribution to the results of your company.

Yours faithfully,

(Your Signature)
(Your Typed Name)

➢ ***COMPILATION OF A LIST OF COMPANIES***

In direct relation to the previous section, compile a list of companies whose job requirements align with the profile you seek. Essentially, seek out companies that interest you for various reasons—such as matching profiles, competitive salaries, or specific contract types—and thoroughly investigate your potential fit within those organizations. Gather general information about each company.

If your investigation yields positive results, it indicates a potential opportunity. At this point, reach out to them by sending a well-drafted cover letter and your CV. Sometimes, the introductory message in the body of your email serves as the letter of introduction.

➢ ***ANALYSE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT PROFESSIONS***

First and foremost, it is essential to recognize that not everyone is suited for all occupations. Each individual possesses specific skills and abilities that make them better suited for certain professions over others. To conduct this analysis effectively, seeking guidance from professionals is advisable. They can help you understand and evaluate the training, experience, and competency requirements for various professions—whether you meet those requirements or not. If there are gaps, they can assist in finding ways to address them.

The purpose of this process is to ensure that job-seeking individuals with disabilities understand that preparation is key. To compete effectively with other job seekers, they must equip themselves with the necessary qualifications. Determining the most suitable occupation for a person with disabilities, including those who are visually impaired, involves a thorough assessment of individual skills and abilities. Here are some steps that can aid in this process:

Self-assessment of skills and interests: A PWD can begin by identifying his or her skills, interests, previous work experiences, and career goals. This can be

done through personal reflection, self-assessment of skills and identification of activities that he/she enjoys and considers himself/herself able to carry out.

Counselling and guidance: Seeking advice and guidance from professionals, such as disability employment counsellors, education and rehabilitation experts, or social workers, can provide an outside perspective and help identify suitable employment options and opportunities.

Researching employment options: Explore employment options based on your abilities, interests and challenges. This may involve researching different industries, sectors, types of work, and employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors.

Assessment of requirements and reasonable accommodation: Assess the requirements of the occupations under consideration and determine whether reasonable accommodation is required. This may involve researching equal opportunity policies, job accommodations, and assistive technology available or required for different work settings.

Internships and previous experience: Consider work placements, internships, traineeships, or volunteering in different roles and settings to gain experience and explore career options. These experiences can help the individual determine what type of work is best suited to them and develop relevant skills.

Support network: Tapping into personal and professional support networks, including family, friends, mentors, and disability support organisations, can provide guidance, advice and networking opportunities that can be valuable during the job search.

Long-term planning: Consider long-term goals and career growth potential when selecting an occupation. This may involve identifying opportunities for professional development, additional training or continuing education that may benefit your long-term career path.

By following these steps and conducting a careful assessment of skills, interests and available employment options, the PWDs, including the visually impaired, can identify the most suitable occupation that fits their needs and abilities.

➢ ***EFFECTIVE JOB INTERVIEW PREPARATION AND TRAINING***

When seeking employment, interview preparation becomes crucial. It is a situation not often encountered, so one must train to achieve the objective: being selected. Additionally, PWDs need to address the topic of disability during interviews. A strong vocabulary, effective body language, knowledge of the company, and skilful handling of challenging questions are essential for success in this process.

Interview training can be conducted individually or in groups. The key is to receive feedback on areas that need strengthening and those that require improvement. To achieve this, in addition to an employment counsellor, video and audio recordings serve as valuable tools. They provide the best way to recognize strengths and weaknesses, allowing individuals to visualize their behaviour, hear their voice, and observe their language use during interviews. By analysing mistakes and identifying positive aspects, candidates can enhance their performance. Even a visually impaired person can share their video recording with a sighted individual to gain insights into behaviour and gestures that need improvement.

When addressing disability, it is crucial to highlight abilities and strive to normalize the situation. The focus should be on what can be accomplished rather than dwelling on limitations.

Before an interview, it is fundamental to take into account aspects such as hygiene, appropriate clothing for the occasion, use of verbal and non-verbal language, knowledge of the company and of one's own curriculum vitae, highlighting one's strong points, how to deal with questions about one's difficulties, what one should and should not say, being clear about availability, mobility, timetable, etc.

However, no matter how much preparation one does, there is always the variable of the interviewer. Depending on their knowledge of the disability, the language they use, their attitude, patience and approach to the interview, candidates may be more or less successful in the selection process.

➢ ***LOCATING JOB OFFERS THROUGH WEBSITES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS***

The following section is on resources for active online job search. Namely, in a relatively short period of time, the approach to job hunting has transformed. Data protection laws have hindered the practice of submitting CVs directly to various companies. Consequently, the internet has emerged as the most accessible avenue for job seekers.

General resources cater to the active job search needs of unemployed individuals. These resources are equally accessible to persons with disabilities, as disability should not preclude them from accessing job opportunities that are not exclusive to their group. Some of the general resources include the following:

- Placement agencies
- Temporary employment agencies
- Job boards
- Publication of offers on social networks...

Specific resources, on the other hand, target people with disabilities, including those who are visually impaired. These resources are designed to assist PWDs in their pursuit of employment. Specific resources include the following:

- The general ones when they present specific offers for the PWD group.
- Targeted job boards
- Special employment centres
- Foundations
- Associations ...

CHAPTER 3: ACQUIRING COMPETENCIES THROUGH EU TOOLS FOR ADULT AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

➢ ***CONTEXT OF ADULT AND INFORMAL EDUCATION***

Various organizations work to legitimize and provide legal support for adult education through non-formal channels. They focus on training as a means to enhance the competencies of citizens who lack access to formal education or need specific skills that informal education can address, tailored to the target group's needs.

Before assessing the basic competences offered by adult and informal education, it is considered necessary to share the results of a report titled "Trends and Issues in Adult Education in Europe" published by the German Adult Education Association[9], and whose data have been obtained from the European Association for the Education of Adults[10] .

Namely, the European Association for the Education of Adults analysed trends in adult education in EU member states and in countries in other parts of the world, and came to the following conclusions:

- The European dimension needs to be strengthened without weakening the long-standing diversity of views and traditions in each country. Deep philosophical differences in values and priorities are reflected in the use and connotation of different terms, making debate difficult. There is a need to revitalise established values and principles, applying them to the new global context of the enlarged EU. The varied history of adult education in Europe differs considerably from region to region and contains powerful Enlightenment elements such as equality and access to knowledge. While adult learning has gained greater recognition since the mid-1990s, at the same time the tension between broad and narrow functionalist perceptions has increased.

[9] German Adult Education Association: https://www.dvv-international.de/en/
[10] European Association for the Education of Adults: https://eaea.org/

- Adult learning is of vital importance to strengthen the European Social Model and to earn the reputation of a vigorous Europe in a globally competitive world.

Adult education is protected and recognised only at a minimal level and in different ways in national legislation. So far, EU efforts in favour of lifelong learning have not been sufficient to change its formal character or to increase the public resources allocated to it.

Adult lifelong learning needs to be recognised and put on the priority list of many governments.

The principle of subsidiarity must be accepted in the legal and financial security provisions, and member states must assume the main responsibilities. The indirect social and non-economic benefits, as well as the direct return on investment in human capital in the labour market, must be recognised. Co-financing needs to become a regular form of support, so that different parties benefit and work together.

Participation in adult education remains highly unequal, with those most in need participating the least. Finding new ways to motivate excluded groups and engage their participation is a high priority for policy, research, and funding.

This requires a shift from supply-driven to demand-driven policies, as well as a focus on diversifying service provision to meet the needs of different groups and individuals, and more strongly supporting locally determined adult learning opportunities.

Adult education has an important contribution to make to the formation of social capital, to the promotion of social inclusion and to efforts to reduce the direct and less obvious costs of social exclusion.

The wider benefits of learning are being recognised for their enormous social, as well as economic value. They must be fully considered in policy and budgetary calculations on the basis of the needs of society and individuals.

There are many good examples of innovation in tackling exclusion and disadvantage through adult learning projects. These need to be studied and disseminated with EU support. A first step is to greatly increase public awareness of these problems, as well as the visibility of adult education as a means of solving them.

Progressive demographic changes, in particular ageing and migration to and within the EU, are placing enormous new demands on national and EU policies. It is essential that adult education adapts and contributes to meeting these new and emerging needs.

Those migrating from one country to another need new skills and knowledge. Host communities, for their part, need to adapt and actively welcome new cultural groups. In this respect, intercultural learning is of great importance.

Cultural changes are also being observed in the field of older and elderly people. Adult education is a necessary tool to help them stay active longer in the workforce, and to lead dynamic and rewarding lives as engaged citizens in retirement.

A sensitive, EU-led approach is needed to create minimum quality indicators that are applicable throughout the Union, and that are appropriate to the particular nature of adult learning.

Recognition and validation, especially of non-formal and informal learning, is important in terms of equity, access, and the labour market. Informal learning is the most effective tool for many of the socially marginalised.

Basic skills and key competences are now recognised as fundamental, unmet needs for many EU citizens, as well as for people living in the poorest regions of the world. A minimum level of services must be provided in all member countries.

Active citizenship is increasingly seen as an essential instrument to revitalise democracies threatened by apathy, loss of motivation, widening gaps between rich and poor and the progressive shrinking of the state. Adult learning represents an important fulcrum for active citizenship and for the European Social Model.

Trends in favour of decentralisation to regions and localities within member states should be reflected in the identification of local needs and the provision of adult education programmes.

The foundations for adult education research are weak and fragmented. It would need to be greatly strengthened within the framework of the EU research programme currently under development, and its fruits used directly to improve policy and promote good practice.

Adult education staffing reflects the marginal, diverse and fragmented nature of adult education. There is an urgent need to redouble efforts at all levels to

identify needs and strengthen the professional development of staff, while avoiding insensitive standardisation.

It is up to Europe to take the lead in changing the global landscape of lifelong learning and adult education. It is in its own interest to do its utmost to do so.

- ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

1. A holistic - holistic, integrated, systematic and comprehensive - perception and policy perspective on adult learning, reflected in the education provided.

This implies the creation of a common European framework for adult learning in order to consolidate adult learning within Europe, building on its diverse national traditions. This will enable European partners to compare, learn and help each other more effectively, thereby increasing the quality and relevance of adult learning.

The culture of adult lifelong learning should permeate all thinking and activities in the public and private sectors, as well as in the third sector. Learning opportunities should be available and accessible to adults throughout their lives and in all settings.

2. Basic public funding, especially for disadvantaged groups, with stable and sustainable local level infrastructure.

Public authorities and governments should pay particular attention to disadvantaged citizens, including specific age groups. Access to adult learning in an expeditious and flexible manner, at all levels, and in all areas of lifelong learning, is essential. It is also fundamental that local communities are actively involved in identifying and meeting needs. Greater attention needs to be paid to the trends of an ageing population and the adult learning that comes with it, rather than concentrating on employment-oriented learning.

Achieving social cohesion, civic participation and economic growth requires a massive process of intercultural education for both native Europeans and newcomers.

3. High quality of provision and staffing.

High quality adult learning support increasingly depends on networks and collaboration with public authorities, social movements,

NGOs, and companies with corporate social responsibilities.

Adult education work requires first-rate staff to take on new roles and meet new demands. Particular attention needs to be paid to their training, support, and professional mobility.

4. Recognition and accreditation of non-formal as well as informal and formal adult learning and education. There is a need to raise public awareness that the extension of validation is not only in the interest of the labour market, and that it does not diminish the authority of formal institutions and impoverish the quality of education and training, but also benefits all actors, especially the majority of adults who make up the learning society. Recognition of the institutionalisation of non-formal learning is a key prerequisite for improving motivation, access, participation and learning outcomes.

5. Use simple key indicators, and support the use of effective research and statistical analysis tools. The only way to achieve the effectiveness and equity of the European Social Model, and to reduce the huge differences within the EU, is not to impose any limits on the contribution of adult learning to the success of the European Social Model. This requires not only an inclusive approach to all forms of adult learning, but also the creation of benchmarks and monitoring systems for planning the development of adult learning, transparent decision-making, and inclusive quality assessment.

These key messages are drawn from the work presented in the first two parts of this study. Their content is closely aligned with the tenor of the key messages that will appear in the forthcoming Communication. It is hoped that they will enable the EU and other authorities guided by the Communication to interpret it, to support it and to implement it in a meaningful and sustainable way [11]

[11]German Adult Education Association https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-722009/documents/adult-education-trends-and-issues-in-europe

➢ ***KEY PRINCIPLES OF ADULT (NON-FORMAL) EDUCATION***

- Adult education is a common and public good and transforms lives and societies.
- Everyone should have the right and the opportunity to access high-quality adult education.
- Anyone can learn regardless of age and environment.
- Entails participation of all pupils and especially those whose basic competences have been poorly reinforced.
- A key task for adult education is to reach disadvantaged learners in order to combat the "Matthew Effect" (this refers to the fact that persons with lower levels of education tend to have fewer opportunities) to participate in adult learning.
- The learner is at the centre of the development, methodology, process, and outcomes of the learning offers.
- Reinforcing non-formal methods and methodologies applies the creativity, existing knowledge, and skills of learners, providing inspiring learning experiences.
- Professional trainers, teachers and staff are needed to apply the right methods to achieve high quality provision and a successful learning experience.
- Capacity development and innovation in adult education organisations are necessary to adapt and anticipate changes in learning, teaching and learners' needs, but also in society and economic development.
- Cooperation (regional, European, global, and institutional) is crucial for the visibility of adult education and for peer learning and innovation transfer.

Research has shown that the fewer people can successfully shape their lives, a skill that is built and rebuilt throughout their lives, the greater the risk of exclusion. This is why adult learning and education are of key value.

The wider benefits of adult education, in addition to the skills and qualifications acquired, are achieved through two mechanisms:

1. Personal characteristics and skills: Adult education and

learning strengthens the development of key personal skills, abilities, and resources, and reinforces the belief in the individual's ability to cope with disadvantaged situations.

2. Social interaction: adult education enables access to individuals and groups with similar and heterogeneous socio-economic backgrounds, fosters social cohesion and offers the possibility of social participation.

➢ ***APPRENTICESHIPS AND EMPLOYMENT***

The positive link between learning and work is obvious: workers, employees, entrepreneurs, and volunteers who learn are more innovative and productive, which makes companies more competitive and successful. Digitalisation, internationalisation, service orientation, flexibilization: all these megatrends in the labour market have one thing in common: they raise and change the requirements for employee competencies. This is not a new development. What is new is that the demands are changing and increasing faster than ever before.

These trends are increasing in parallel with the pace at which employees have to adapt to constant change and gain new competences. Professional skills need to be regularly updated and meta-skills, such as social and communication skills, become essential. It is therefore logical that almost all studies on labour market developments and the future of work come to the same conclusion: to master the ongoing transformation, continuous training and workplace learning are simply indispensable, not only for low-skilled employees but for all. Equally, for those out of work, adult learning increases resilience and reduces the effects of the loss of confidence associated with unemployment of more than three months.

Persons without the right skills are highly vulnerable to changes in the labour market. This calls for continuous investments in education and training. Therefore, the EAEA highlights the importance of upgrading and re-skilling and underlines that all learning is good for employment.

INFORMAL EDUCATION IN EUROPE[12]

Informal education in Europe comprises a wide range of learning activities that are not structured according to traditional models of formal education. These activities can take place in a variety of settings, such as local communities, non-profit organisations, special interest groups, cultural and recreational activities, among others. Here are some characteristics and examples of informal education in Europe:

1. **Community workshops and courses**: Many communities in Europe offer workshops and courses on a variety of topics, such as languages, crafts, cooking, music, dance, art, gardening, among others. These programmes are often organised by libraries, community centres, neighbourhood associations and cultural organisations.
2. **Clubs and interest groups**: Clubs and special interest groups are common throughout Europe and provide opportunities for persons to meet and learn about specific topics of interest to them. This can include book clubs, hiking groups, local history clubs, astronomy groups, among others.
3. **Volunteering and community work**: Volunteering and community work offer opportunities to learn new skills and contribute to the well-being of the community. Volunteers can participate in environmental conservation projects, humanitarian aid, assistance to elderly or persons with disabilities, among others.
4. **Cultural activities and events**: Europe is rich in cultural activities, such as festivals, exhibitions, concerts, theatre performances and museum visits. Participating in these activities not only offers the opportunity to appreciate local culture, but also to learn about history, art, and traditions.
5. **Informal workplace learning**: Many adults in Europe acquire new skills and knowledge through work experience and workplace training.

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[12] European Association for the Education of Adults. (2021). "Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century": https://eaea.org/our-work/influencing-policy/manifesto-for-adult-learning-in-the-21st-century/

This may include learning new technologies, work procedures, communication and leadership skills, among others.

6. **Intergenerational learning**: Activities that involve people from different generations, such as mentoring programmes between youth and older adults, can provide valuable learning opportunities and encourage the transmission of knowledge and experience between different age groups.

In summary, informal education in Europe encompasses a wide range of learning activities that take place outside the formal setting of education. These activities are central to promoting lifelong learning, fostering community participation, and enriching the cultural and social life of people in Europe.

➢ ***ADULT EDUCATION IN EUROPE***

Adult education in Europe is an integral part of the education systems of many European countries. It focuses on providing learning opportunities for people over 18 who have not completed their formal education or who wish to continue learning and acquiring new skills.

Some highlights of adult education in Europe include:

1. **Formal education programmes**: Many European countries offer adult education programmes within the formal education system. These may include basic education, secondary education or technical and vocational education programmes for adults who wish to improve their skills or qualifications.
2. **Non-formal education**: In addition to formal education, there are numerous non-formal learning opportunities for adults in Europe. These may include language courses, practical skills workshops, digital literacy programmes, among others. These initiatives are often organised by educational institutions, non-profit organisations, and government agencies.
3. **Distance and online education**: With the advancement of technology, adult education in Europe has also adapted to online and distance modes. Many institutions offer online courses that allow adults to learn at their own pace and from anywhere with Internet access.
4. **Vocational education and training**: Adult education in Europe also focuses on providing specific skills and training for employment. This may include vocational training programmes, skills upgrading courses and re-employment programmes for adults seeking to change careers or re-enter the labour market.
5. **Policies and funding**: European governments often have specific policies and programmes to promote adult education, as well as funds to support these initiatives. This may include grants for educational institutions, scholarships for adults wishing to continue their education, and funds for skills development projects.

In general, adult education in Europe is seen as central to promoting social inclusion, enhancing employability and economic development, as well as

promoting lifelong learning. Efforts focus on ensuring that all persons have access to learning opportunities, regardless of their age, educational background, or socio-economic situation.

➢ ***CORE COMPETENCES***

Adult education plays a crucial role in the acquisition of competencies in a variety of areas. These competencies can be practical skills as well as socio-emotional and cognitive skills. Here are some ways in which adult education facilitates the acquisition of competencies:

1. **Basic skills**: Many adult education programmes focus on improving basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, and mastery of basic communication skills. These skills are essential for effective functioning in society and the labour market.

2. **Job and vocational skills**: Adult education offers opportunities to acquire specific employment and career-related skills. This may include training in information technology, technical and clerical skills, management and leadership skills, and training in specific industry sectors.

3. **Digital skills**: In an increasingly digitised world, adult education plays a crucial role in developing digital skills. This can involve learning to use computers and mobile devices, navigating the internet safely, using productivity software and understanding basic programming concepts.

4. **Language and communication skills**: Adult education programmes can also help to improve language and communication skills in a second or native language. This is especially important in multicultural environments and for those seeking to improve their employability in a globalised labour market.

5. **Social and emotional competences**: Adult education is not only about acquiring practical skills, but also about developing social and emotional competences. This may include teamwork skills, conflict resolution, empathy, self-awareness, and stress management.

6. **Life skills**: In addition to work and social skills, adult education can help to acquire practical life skills, such as financial skills, decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, and planning and organisational skills.

Adult education therefore provides an environment in which individuals can acquire a wide range of competences that are fundamental to their personal, professional, and social development. These competences not only enhance employability and the ability to cope with life's challenges, but also contribute to personal enrichment and continuous lifelong growth.

➢ ***COMPETENCE ACQUISITION PATHWAYS***

Informal education refers to learning that occurs outside traditional formal education settings, such as schools and universities. This type of education includes everyday experiences, social interactions, self-learning, and extracurricular activities. Acquiring skills through informal education can be as valuable as formal education and can offer a variety of benefits. Here are some ways in which skills can be acquired through informal education:

1. **Experiential learning**: Engaging in practical experiences and problem solving in real-world situations can be effective ways of learning. This could include internships, volunteer projects or participation in community activities.
2. **Mentoring**: Informal education often includes tutoring and learning from persons more experienced in a specific field. Mentoring provides an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge, skills, and perspectives from someone who has already walked the path.
3. **Self-taught:** The active pursuit of knowledge through reading, online research, watching tutorials and independent practice are important components of informal education. Many persons acquire skills on their own through exploration and experimentation.
4. **Social and professional networking**: Participating in online communities or social events can provide opportunities to learn from others and establish meaningful connections. Interacting with persons with similar interests or expertise in a field can be enriching and conducive to knowledge sharing.
5. **Travel and cultural experiences:** Exposure to different cultures, whether through travel or interactions with people from diverse communities, can broaden perspective and provide a deeper understanding of diverse realities and skills.
6. **Soft skills development**: Informal education often focuses on the development of soft skills such as effective communication, teamwork, problem solving and adaptability. These skills are crucial in everyday life and in the work environment.

It is important to note that informal education does not exclude the possibility of formal qualifications or recognition, but its approach is more flexible and tailored to individual needs. The combination of formal and informal education can be particularly powerful, as it provides a broader range of learning experiences and prepares individuals comprehensively for life and career challenges.

Lack of literature or resources on adult education and disability

There are a variety of training resources available for adults with disabilities who want to learn new skills, improve their education or train for employment. Here is a list of some common resources:

Specialised education and training centres: Many communities have specialised education and training centres that offer programmes tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities. These centres may provide basic education courses, job training, social skills programmes, among others.

Distance education programmes: Distance education programmes can be a flexible option for adults with disabilities who prefer to study from home. There are numerous institutions and online platforms that offer courses in a variety of areas, from literacy to information technology.

Specialised education services: Specialised education services may include tutoring, mentoring or individualised assistance for adults with disabilities who need additional support in their learning. These services may be provided by education and rehabilitation experts, occupational therapists, or social workers.

Vocational and technical training programmes: Many institutions offer vocational and technical training programmes tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities. These programmes may include training in specific skills related to fields such as computer skills, business administration, customer service, among others.

Non-profit organisations: There are numerous non-profit organisations dedicated to supporting persons with disabilities in their education and training. These organisations may offer mentoring programmes, scholarships, educational counselling, and disability-specific resources.

Work inclusion programmes: Some organisations offer work inclusion programmes that combine training and work experience for adults with disabilities. These programmes can help participants acquire relevant

employment skills and provide opportunities for internships or paid employment.

Online resources: There are numerous online resources designed specifically for adults with disabilities, offering information, advice, and tools to support their education and training. These resources may include websites, videos, podcasts, and downloadable materials.

It is important to research and explore the resources available in your local area or online to find the programmes and services that best suit your educational needs and goals.

Here are some organisations that could help visually impaired persons find employment in Croatia, Spain, and Slovenia:

- **Croatia:**

Croatian Blind Union (Hrvatski savez slijepih, HSS): This is the national umbrella organisation representing blind people in Croatia, gathering 26 local associations of the blind across the territory of the Republic of Croatia. HSS can refer you to your local association of the blind. As an NGO, it implements projects often aimed at increasing employability of the blind.

Institute for Expert Assessments, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

- **Spain:**

ONCE (National Organization of the Spanish Blind): ONCE is one of the leading organisations in Spain offering a wide range of employment services and programmes for persons with visual impairment, including training, job orientation and job placement programmes.

ONCE Foundation: Foundation ONCE, a partner of ONCE, also offers employment services and job placement programmes for visually impaired persons in Spain, including counselling, training, and workplace adaptation.

Inserta empleo is the ONCE Foundation's entity specialising in the provision of labour intermediation services, recruitment, and development of talent with disabilities and employment management, with the aim of achieving the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market.

- **Slovenia:**

Zveza društev slepih in slabovidnih Slovenije (ZDSSS): This is the Association of the Blind and Low Vision in Slovenia, which can offer employment services and support to persons with visual impairment in job search, vocational training, and job placement programmes.

Centre IRIS: This centre located in Slovenia offers support and counselling services for persons with visual impairment, including career guidance, job skills training and employment programmes.

These are some of the organisations that could help visually impaired persons find employment in Croatia, Spain, and Slovenia. It is important to contact these organisations for specific information about the services they offer and how they can provide support in the job search.

CHAPTER 4: ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS: TRADITIONAL AND MODERN PROFESSIONS

Visually impaired persons, both blind and low vision, can perform jobs in all sectors such as marketing and communications, human resources, social services, tourism, business management and administration, health, law, and agriculture, among others. There are certainly some professions where good eyesight is a prerequisite for qualifications, as well as for specific job roles, such as pilot, surgeon, or professional baseball player. However, it is important not to underestimate the opportunities and possibilities in sectors such as transport, medicine and sport, among others, bearing in mind that within any sector there may be other types of jobs that a visually impaired person can perform, with a required level of skill, adaptability, effort, reasonable accommodation and support.

And in order to talk about the real inclusion of visually impaired persons in the labour market, it is crucial to understand the meaning of the term "reasonable accommodation". Namely, thanks to these adaptations, the employment opportunities for persons with disabilities are significantly extended.

- **"Reasonable accommodation" is any change to a job or work environment that is necessary to enable a person with a disability to apply for, perform and progress in the duties of his or her job or to receive training. Reasonable accommodation is for any employee with a disability. The right to reasonable accommodation extends to all work-related activities covered**

by EU law, from the job application process to the termination of employment. It also extends to working conditions and fringe benefits. "

The most important type of reasonable accommodation for visually impaired employees are technical solutions, especially in terms of assistive technology. However, the limitations often lie in the rigidity of a job description and the lack of a broader perspective on the part of the interviewer. Nevertheless, there are many unknown or unexplored and therefore undervalued ways of using ICT solutions to overcome the performance-related challenges of a candidate with vision loss[13]

Popular examples of assistive technology include:

- Keyboard settings (e.g., larger keyboard or keyboard with physical letters or Braille).
- Optical scanners that can create documents in electronic format from printed documents.
- External magnifiers for computer screens.
- Closed-circuit television (CCTV) system for the reading of printed material.
- Digital recorders, such as speech-to-text or transcription software.
- Software that will read the information on the computer screen (in order not to disturb other employees, the employee must have a headset).

[13] Your Europe. "Reasonable Accommodation for Staff with Disabilities": https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/human-resources/equal-treatment-qualifications/reasonable-accommodation/index_en.htm

- Braille terminals for blind and visually impaired persons to interact with a computer.
- Braille embossers (also known as "Braille printers", this is the device that presses dots onto a sheet of paper so that the person using Braille can read with their fingers).

Taking into account the variety of abilities, qualifications, degree of vision loss, level of coping and adaptability to vision loss of individuals, there is no special category of professions or single list of jobs that blind or partially sighted persons can consider and therefore no single approach for visually impaired job seeker.[14]

"No two blind or partially sighted persons have exactly the same level of functional vision or the same approach to executing work-related tasks. Some use their vision more than others; some can work more efficiently when using non-visual techniques. Most will use adaptations to perform competitively at work."[15]

➢ ***CONTEXT - PROFESSIONS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS***

- ***Croatia***

The employment challenges of visually impaired persons are manifold, ranging from non-competitive occupations for which blind persons are

[14] EBU Guidelines on Reasonable Accommodation for visually impaired employees and applicants: https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/EBU%20guidance%20on%20reasonable%20accommodation%20for%20visually%20impaired%20employees%20and%20applicants_Sept2023.pdf

[15] Association of Visually Impaired Women "You Can Do It": https://www.aviw-youcan.eu/en/?p=63

educated to prejudices and stereotypes from the environment, employers, and discrimination in employment. According to the data from the Croatian Employment Service, visually impaired persons work as telephone operators in call centres, masseurs and administrative secretaries, and those who have obtained higher education are often employed as teachers, lawyers, physiotherapists and work in specialised institutions operating in the fields of education, rehabilitation or other support services for the blind. However, it is important to point out here the positive example from the Split-Dalmatia County, with its first visually impaired Tourist Guide based in Split. Nevertheless, in Croatia there is only one specialized state institution for the formal education of the blind. This is the Vinko Bek Education Centre, located in the capital city of Zagreb. The centre offers primary and secondary education programmes for young blind persons and psychosocial rehabilitation for adults. Primary education lasts the same length as mainstream primary education in Croatia, 8 years. The school provides accommodation and care for pupils coming from other cities. As for secondary education, there are currently 3 programmes available at the Centre:

1. Business secretary (students are trained to perform all administrative and secretarial work in companies and state institutions - communication with clients, use of office communication aids and media, especially computers with special equipment for the blind and visually impaired.
2. Telephone operator (trainees acquire highly functional knowledge and skills - knowledge of traffic, position, and role of telecommunications, mastering the skills and techniques of telephony and computer typing and the basics of contact centre work).
3. Administrator (are trained for simple office work).

- ***Spain***

In Spain, the best-known traditional profession is that of ONCE lottery seller. Specifically, in 1938 the ONCE, the Spanish National Organisation for the Blind, was founded to respond to the needs of blind persons and provide them with access to decent work through the sale of lottery tickets. Many blind persons in Spain, who currently hold important positions, started out as coupon sellers.

Currently, around 20,000 persons with some type of disability are ONCE sellers throughout Spain. A sales network that increasingly has more and more women on its staff.

For ONCE, one of its fundamental objectives is to achieve the inclusion of persons who are blind or with low vision in the ordinary labour market, as a way to complete their full social inclusion. To achieve this objective, it has an Employment Support Service which, spread over 22 centres throughout Spain, is responsible for the social and occupational integration of its members and for supporting them in maintaining their jobs. To this end, it offers personalised and individualised attention where the person is provided with professional advice that allows them, among other things, to establish an agreed professional itinerary, achieve adequate professional training through employment training, as well as to manage their job application in the corresponding job offers and aid for self-employment, as indicated above. In turn, ONCE offers advice to employers who wish to hire a person with blindness or severe vision loss, as well as the adaptations they need to carry out their work in a normalised manner, free of charge for both the company and the member. As an added guarantee for the maintenance of the job, ONCE, through its employment support specialists, offers its members actions aimed at preventing exclusion from the labour market.

On the other hand, its confidence in the talent and competence of persons with disabilities led ONCE to also promote its own group of companies that expand job opportunities, not only for persons with

visual impairment, but also with other disabilities, and founded ILUNION, a group of social companies that currently has 479 work centres and which, since 2014, has been demonstrating in different sectors (social healthcare, tourism, consultancy, etc.) that social and economic profitability are possible. And which has recently begun its international expansion. In this way, ONCE, ONCE Foundation and ILUNION form a model of a social group that is unique in the world, with a commitment to the social and employment normalisation of blind persons and other groups with disabilities, identified under the common seal of the ONCE Social Group, which between its three entities employs a total of 68,467 workers, of whom 38,780, 57%, are persons with disabilities.

Among the posts filled from highest to lowest occupancy rate are telephony (38/32.76%), physiotherapy (12/10.34%), administration assistant (12/10.34%), information and reception staff (9/7.76%), community workers (4/3.45%), social work (4/3.45%), other professionals (4/3.45%), primary education (3/2.59%), and building caretakers (3/2.59%).

The model of educational intervention carried out in Spain with students with blindness or severe visual impairment is a model that is enabling their full academic and social inclusion. It is based on the so-called educational inclusion, a precept that is included in the current school legislation, and which must be complied with by all Educational Administrations (in Spain, education is transferred to the Autonomous Communities).

For this reason, the ONCE signs collaboration agreements on educational matters with all the educational administrations of the autonomous communities. Through these agreements, students have access to all the resources of the ordinary system and, in addition, the

specific resources of the ONCE through its Educational Resource Centres (CRE), located in Alicante, Barcelona, Madrid, Pontevedra and Seville, which provide direct care and complementary services.

Currently, more than 99% of students with visual impairment attend mainstream schools in their town, neighbourhood, or city of residence, following the official school curriculum.

These students receive complementary attention according to their specific needs related to visual impairment (Braille teaching, new technologies, personal autonomy, orientation and mobility or social competence, among others), which is provided by the specialised professionals of the Specific Teams for educational attention to visual impairment.

How to achieve true inclusive education

The aim is to achieve the greatest possible normalisation and inclusion of the student in the family, social and educational environment. This is done through the following activities:

Diagnostic assessment of the student's abilities and difficulties.

Reception and accompaniment of the family, if needed.

Specialist advice on the needs of the child, if any, and the family.

Guidance on the intervention programme.

Intervention by specialised professionals who form Specific Teams made up of various professionals (psychologists, teachers, therapists, social workers, rehabilitation technicians...).

Coordination with other early childhood centres, schools, and services.

Information on existing resources.

[16]In addition, ONCE has a University School of Physiotherapy for those persons who wish to take these studies, which are completely adapted to their needs, and which offer one hundred per cent employment opportunities and subsequent employability.

- ***Slovenia***

Traditionally, the most represented profession of the visually impaired in Slovenia was that of a telephonist. Before the integration of children with visual impairment into mainstream primary schools, which started in Slovenia sometime in the 1990s, and formally in 2000. More or less all children with visual impairment, regardless of the type of visual impairment they had, were enrolled in primary school at the Institute for Young Blind and Visually Impaired in Ljubljana. The vast majority of pupils, after finishing primary school, decided to continue their education at the Training Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Škofja Loka, where there were training programmes for teleoperators and manufacturing professions, as well as the baccalaureate programme for administration operators. Thus, the vast majority of blind and partially sighted persons were trained for the profession of tele-operator, but with the advancement of technology and the restructuring of the economy in the 1990s, this profession became increasingly redundant, which made the employment opportunities for blind and partially sighted persons much more challenging. Today, according to some unofficial data, approximately 8% of VIPs are employed.

[16] ONCE. "Inclusive Education": https://educacion.once.es/acl_users/credentials_cookie_auth/require_login?came_from=https%3A//educacion.once.es/otras-webs/english

Following the adoption of the Guidance for Children with Special Needs Act in 2000, which determined the integration of blind and visually impaired children into mainstream education, the two educational institutions for the blind and visually impaired in Slovenia merged into the IRIS Centre, which integrates pre-school, primary, secondary, and vocational education.

In both Slovenia and Croatia, there is an increasing emphasis in educational programmes on new didactic approaches for teachers in mainstream schools. In the future, the Institute for Young Blind and Visually Impaired in Slovenia plans to expand and become the Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Integration, with the aim of becoming a modern centre that also caters for the needs of blind and visually impaired children with multiple disabilities. On the other hand, the "Vinko Bek" Centre in Croatia is already fulfilling this mission, with two branches in Split and Osijek. Since the vast majority of children with visual impairment are enrolled in mainstream schools, the IRIS Centre (Slovenia) as well as the "Vinko Bek" Centre (Croatia) provide them with support and external educational activities. In addition to children with visual impairment, the Iris Centre also increasingly includes children whose primary disability is not visual impairment, but intellectual development disorders.

In addition to pre-school and primary education, the IRIS Centre also offers secondary and vocational programmes:

- gastronomy and tourism (secondary vocational education)
- economic technician (second cycle vocational education)
- economic technician (vocational-technical training)
- administrator (secondary vocational education)
- assistant administrator (lower-level vocational training)
- assistant in biotechnology and care (first cycle vocational training)

Experience shows that most students complete their education successfully. After secondary education, most of them enrol in higher education programmes. Unfortunately, they often face challenges in finding a job after successful completion of their studies.

Adapted computer technology for the blind and visually impaired, which began to be introduced in the world in the 1980s, and in Slovenia in the early 1990s, facilitated access to information for the visually impaired, increased study opportunities and enabled many previously inaccessible professions to be carried out independently. It is therefore all the more important to develop ways of raising awareness among employers that, with appropriate adaptations, blind and partially sighted persons can be equal to persons without limitations in the workplace. Through business incubators, it is also necessary to encourage and empower visually impaired persons to develop their own business ideas and embark on their own entrepreneurial journey.

The three countries mentioned above have in common that so-called 'special schools for the blind and partially sighted' are gradually becoming resource centres. Namely, resource centres throughout Europe, are aimed at supporting the process of integration of the visually impaired into mainstream educational institutions. This reflects the variety of educational paths followed by the visually impaired and, consequently, the wide range of both traditional and modern work roles performed by the visually impaired.

The following is an overview of traditional and modern occupations of the visually impaired, indicating the most common occupations held by visually impaired persons in three project partner countries. The list is not exhaustive, due to the complexity of the characteristics that influence the choice and position held by each visually impaired person.

In addition, there are professions that seem traditional, but are still very popular and therefore also considered modern.

- ***<u>OCCUPATIONS THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN UNDERTAKEN BY VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS:</u>***

- ADMINISTRATOR
- BAKER
- BASKET MAKER
- BRUSH MAKER
- BUSINESS SECRETARY
- CANDLE MAKER
- CARPET MAKER
- CERAMIST
- COMPOSER
- CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE
- FURNITURE MAKER
- LAWYER
- MUSICIAN
- PIANO TUNER
- POTTER
- PROFESSOR
- RECEPTIONIST
- SCULPTOR
- TELECOMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR
- TYPEWRITER

➢ ***NEW PERSPECTIVES OF EMPLOYMENT FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS:***

- ACCESSIBILITY CONSULTANT
- AUDIO DESCRIBER
- COMPUTER PROGRAMMER
- CALL CENTRE OPERATOR
- CONTENT WRITER
- DEVELOPER
- EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION EXPERT
- ENTREPRENEUR
- PUBLIC RELATIONS EXPERT
- JOURNALIST
- MASSEUR
- PHILOLOGIST
- PHYSIOTHERAPIST
- PSYCHOLOGIST
- SOFTWARE ENGINEER
- SOUND ENGINEER
- TELEMARKETING SPECIALIST
- TOURIST GUIDE
- TRANSLATOR
- VOICE-OVER (RADIO/PODCAST)

CONCLUSION

In this final section, the project consortium aims to summarize the most pertinent information — the most crucial ideas explored throughout this handbook.

Let us start by recalling the objective that led us to carry out this project. Bringing the labour market closer to persons with visual impairment, improving their employability, offering knowledge and resources that increase their professional skills, are the main objectives of this work. And for this purpose, we have developed 3 chapters with very practical and useful content.

The Handbook starts with available data on unemployment rates (see Chapter 1), which demonstrates that we are still far from achieving a society with equal opportunities, individualized approaches and universal design principles reflected in all areas of our lives.

However, nowadays, when technological engagement is indispensable for participation in political, cultural, and economic processes, in the case of persons with disabilities, and in particular the visually impaired, technology, especially assistive technology, is indispensable for their insertion in the labour market.

Consequently, positive aspects relate to the participation of visually impaired persons in entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and special employment centres, as well as disability-related benefits in the field of employment (see Chapter 2). Further training, non-formal and informal learning opportunities offered across Europe, through different national and international initiatives, programmes and projects, present additional avenues of support to increase their employability skills (see Chapter 3).

Modern ICT professions, among others, combined with the use of assistive technology, present valuable employment opportunities for the visually impaired (see Chapter 4).

As our last but not least, small contribution, we conclude this Handbook with a short list of tips for a visually impaired person seeking employment, also applicable to persons with other types of disabilities.

➢ ***3 KEY TIPS***

1. Write two lists: a list of things/skills you are good at and a list of things/skills you would like or think you need to improve on.
   Relate each item on your lists to one or more pieces/examples from your work/life experience.
   - The first list can be used to compile your strengths and use them to write a CV or cover letter (see Chapter 2).
   - The second list contains your weaknesses, which you can improve by participating in courses/projects/workshops (see Chapter 3).

2. Research all the information about the company and its facilities; think about or plan how you will get there and find its headquarters.
   - Always tailor the information you provide in your CV/cover letter to the skills/qualities you possess, and which are listed in a specific job offer.
   - Very fun and useful is a role-play of an interviewer and a candidate, which you should try out with a friend, practicing all kinds of scenarios and difficult or awkward questions.

3. Remember that you are the one providing a solution, so learn about the benefits for the employer who hires a PWD, as well as your rights and benefits as an employee with a disability.

- Maintain a positive attitude and approach, bearing in mind that people don't usually have bad intentions, they often don't know or understand, so you are there to help them.

USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

- WEBSITE of the project: https://erasmus-assistivetechnology.udrugaslijepih.hr/
- European Blind Union (EBU) publications, resources, and guidelines https://www.euroblind.org/publications-and-resources/guidelines
- Croatian Blind Union, CBU (Hrvatski savez slijepih, HSS) https://savez-slijepih.hr/
- e-Citizens (e-Građani) https://gov.hr/hr/poticaji-pri-zaposljavanju-osoba-s-invaliditetom/1390
- Croatian Institute for Expert Assessments, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (ZOSI) https://www.zosi.hr/novosti/zosi_news/poslodavci_ostvarite_poticaje_zosia_za_zaposlene_osobe_s_invaliditetom-1891/
- Croatian Employment Service (HZZ) https://mjere.hzz.hr/katalog-mjera/mjere-aktivnog-zaposljavanja/
- Croatian Act on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities https://www.zakon.hr/z/493/Zakon-o-profesionalnoj-
- ONCE. Spanish National Organisation of the Blind https://www.once.es/otras-webs/english
- ONCE Foundation. https://www.fundacionONCE.es/en
- ONCE. Inclusive Education. https://educacion.once.es/acl_users/credentials_cookie_auth/require_login?came_from=https%3A//educacion.once.es/otras-webs/english
- Inserta Empleo. https://www.insertaempleo.es/
- Slovenian Blind Union (Zveza društev slepih in slabovidnih Slovenije - ZDSSS), https://www.zveza-slepih.si/

- Centre IRIS – Centre for Education, Rehabilitation, Inclusion and Counselling for the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia, https://center-iris.si/o-nas/center-iris-en/
- University Rehabilitation institute Republic of Slovenia (URI Soča), https://www.uri-soca.si/en/
- Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia (Zavod za zaposlovanje Republike Slovenije, ZRSZ), https://www.ess.gov.si/iskalci-zaposlitve/programi-za-zaposlovanje/zaposlovanje-invalidov/
- National Center for Rehabilitation of Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia, (Nacionalni center za rehabilitacijo slepih in slabovidnih, NC CRSS), https://www.registerslepih.si/institut

CONTACT PERSONS

Croatia:

County Association of Blind People of Split, CABPS (Županijska udruga slijepih Split, ŽUSS)

E-mail: split@udrugaslijepih.hr

Web: https://www.udrugaslijepih.hr/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/udrugaslijepihsplit

Spain:

La Brújula. Formación Inclusiva

Email: labrujula@formacioninclusiva.es

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/labrujulaformacioninclusiva?igsh=Nm83dDZ2NDBhcGJr&utm_source=qr

Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100066406463769

Slovenia:

Regional Association of Blind and Partially Sighted Kranj, MDSS Kranj (Medobčinsko društvo slepih in slabovidnih Kranj)

E-mail: pisarna@mdsskr-drustvo.si

Web: https://www.mdsskr-drustvo.si

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/MDSSKranj/

KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE: INTRODUCTION TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS

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