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INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE LIVES OF DISABLED PEOPLE

The paper deals with problems related to meeting the individual and social needs of people with disabilities. It indicates that people with disabilities expect individual and proposed support from non-governmental organisations and institutions and organisations supporting people with disabilities locally. The paper presents organisational and legal regulations concerning social and professional integration, accessibility, independence and equality on the labour market. The theoretical issues presented in the paper present the problems of people with disabilities and a proposal to solve individual problems of people with disabilities in the areas of, among others, preventing educational and professional inequalities. The paper presents tasks to promote vocational education and employment by including people with disabilities in a flexible and open system. It points to the importance of adapting vocational and continuing education institutions, workplaces and the social and professional environment to the needs and possibilities of people with disabilities. This paper presents the directions of changes and improvement of the relation: education – social environment – labour market and striving to correlate vocational education with social environment and labour market. The paper indicates that in the system of education and

professional activation and employment of people with disabilities it is important to support people with disabilities through aid services. People with disabilities expect assistance and support from career advisers and assistants both in their working life and in the social environment. Assistance services offered, among others, in school career centres, county and voivodeship employment offices and social assistance centres solve some of the problems of people with disabilities, ensuring, among others, integration and equal opportunities in education and on the open labour market. The proposed institutional and organisational assistance supports people with disabilities in social and professional life. It is essential to seek to correlate the assistance offered with problems reported individually by people with disabilities.

Keywords: individual and social problems; people with disabilities; support; assistance; equal opportunities; integration.

Introduction. The diverse individual and social problems of people with disabilities depend to a large extent on the type of disability. They are also in relation to activities supporting the education and employment system and the professional

activity of these people. Supporting activities, in turn, play a special role in solving problems related to disability in every area of social and professional life. Aid tasks and targeted programmes, which are addressed to people with various limitations and damages [1, p. 28; 2, p. 46; 3, p. 115], determine the directions of actions taken. The development of programmes solving the problems of people with disabilities is assisted by content from the field of education, employment, professional activation and the labour market, with particular emphasis on specific opportunities and needs. In the light of the systemic changes relating to the above areas it is important to define the principles upon which the individual and social problems in the lives of people with disabilities are solved.

The implementation of these principles is conditioned by laws, regulations, communications or other organisational and legal documents, which aim at improving the education process and the process of employment and professional activation in the labour market [4]. What is more, the statistics show that every year there is a growing number of people with disabilities who need or expect support in solving individual and social problems and who benefit from assistance from institutions and organisations supporting people with disabilities. The assistance and support offered particularly relates to counselling, choice of profession, preparation for the profession, job placement, employment, restoring the ability to work and independent existence [5, p. 21]. Supporting people with disabilities, while striving for their equal participation in social and professional life, sets the directions of change and improvement of the relation: education – social environment – labour market. It is now essential to seek to correlate vocational training with the social environment and the labour market. The adopted objectives and actions taken ensure the implementation of the introduced directions of changes in education and the labour market, and in particular stimulate entrepreneurship, which is so important for people with disabilities, and strengthen the adaptability of both employers and employees [6]. The introduction of changes and improvement of the adopted solutions results, on the one hand, from the needs and possibilities of people with disabilities and the needs of the labour market, and on the other hand, from the requirements of the EU market economy [7, p. 24].

In the countries of the European Union, social and territorial cohesion, which is focused, among others, on the quality of

education, is of great importance [8, p. 95]. The way to achieve the goal is to improve system solutions which, in connection with the labour market, will increase employment and professional activity. The occupational activity is influenced by key competences [9, p. 277], defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the situation [10, p. 92]. These determine employment and provide a competitive advantage in the open and European labour market [9, p. 277], while linking the vocational training system to the labour market [11, p. 5]. Flexible vocational training, adapted to the expectations of employers and the open labour market, assumes, among others:

- professional preparation of people with disabilities according to their development and degree of disability [13, p. 27];
- preparation for flexible forms of employment and work organisation [14, p. 26];
- change in the attitudes of the environment [12, p. 27];
- preparation for work in competitive market conditions [14, p. 26];
- shaping "professional suitability" for substantive professional work and "social suitability" for work among people [15, p. 89];
- shaping basic skills, useful both in professional work at various positions and in past-time [13, p. 26].

From the point of view of the issues related to meeting the needs of people with disabilities, assuming full integration and equal opportunities, the implementation of such tasks requires additional accessibility to the infrastructure of vocational training institutions and improvement of technical and didactic conditions in both schools and workplaces [16; 4]. One of the legal acts of fundamental importance for the issue in question is the Act of 7 July 1994 on Spatial Development [17], which sets out the procedure in cases of allocating land for specific purposes and determining the rules for their development, and obliges to take into account the requirements of the disabled in spatial development.

The Act of 7 July 1994 – Construction Law [18] obliges to design, build, use and maintain a building object in accordance with the regulations, in a way that ensures the necessary conditions for the use of public facilities by disabled people, in particular those in wheelchairs. The Regulation of the Minister of Spatial Planning and Construction of 14 December 1994 on technical conditions to be met by buildings and their location [19] sets out regulations for the construction, reconstruction, modernization and change of use of public buildings,

including educational facilities, taking into account the needs of the disabled. In turn, regulations on ensuring safe and hygienic conditions and adapting the workplace to the psychophysical and anthropometric conditions, as well as to the type and degree of disability were included in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 31 December 2002 on safety and hygiene in public and non-public schools and institutions [20].

The adaptation of vocational education institutions, workplaces and the social and vocational environment to the above regulations, taking into account the needs and capabilities of the disabled, will strengthen the beneficial phenomenon of raising certified professional skills and abilities, comparable to those of non-disabled people [21, p. 91]. This will create opportunities to solve important individual and social problems of people with disabilities, while strengthening social inclusion, economic independence and equality in the labour market. The principle of integration and equal opportunities of people with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining a job [14, p. 59] was confirmed in the Standard Rules for Equalising Opportunities of People with Disabilities [12, p. 21]. Additionally, in the document entitled The European Social Charter [22, p. 55], the legislator defined, among other things, the universality of access to education and support for integration and cooperation, both in extracurricular institutions and organisations, in vocational and social rehabilitation [23].

The initiative of universal access to education consists in identifying and improving tasks supporting organisations and associations working for the needs of children and young people with disabilities [24]. This underlines the importance of accessibility and cooperation of institutions and organisations with schools, which in their strategic development programmes define tasks to strengthen an active-market attitude [21, p. 91]. One of the particularly important tasks is to adapt the infrastructure of schools, workplaces and workshops to the needs and possibilities of people with disabilities, along with equipping rooms, studios and laboratories with teaching aids [25, p. 38] as well as with the necessary equipment for rehabilitation and revalidation [26, p. 246; 27, p. 154; 25, p. 39]. An equally important aspect is the introduction of modern teaching aids, techniques and methods used in pedagogical practice. These include for example [28, p. 23]: methods of active teaching and learning by acting and discovering task situations, methods of

stimulation to independent and creative activity, methods of achieving success, with observance of the principles of acceptance of achievements and kindness towards the student [28, p.22-23].

The adaptation of didactic and technical conditions of schools to the individual needs and abilities of people with disabilities occupies a prominent place in education and rehabilitation [29]. It is also an important element of multilateral influence on the process of vocational education and on the process of professional activation and employment. At the same time, it solves the individual and social problems of people with disabilities, ensuring integration and equal opportunities in education and the open labour market. It is also in line with the Council of Europe Directive, which establishes the principle of equal treatment in employment and occupation [14, p. 61]. According to the adopted principle, when implementing tasks increasing the professional activation of people with disabilities, the education and employment system of these people should be improved, based, among others, on activities related to integration with the healthy people community [44]. In addition, according to the literature on the subject, the following improvement solutions may influence greater economic activity and employment of people with disabilities in the labour market:

- creation of integrated conditions for gaining education and raising of professional qualifications [30, p. 114];
- sensitization to social problems of disabled people [14, p. 79];
- breaking down communication barriers, facilitating access to necessary information for people with disabilities [12, p. 28];
- modernisation of the adult education system, which in consequence will reduce the degree of social exclusion among people with disabilities [31, p. 94];
- introducing access to education on equal rights and eliminating barriers from public space [32, p. 99];
- improving qualifications, for example through participation in courses where people with disabilities can acquire additional skills or develop their abilities [32, p. 117];
- developing various legal and organisational forms to increase aid activities,
- adapting training offers to the requirements of the labour market and equipping people with disabilities with knowledge and skills expected by employers [33, p. 178];
- increasing the share of aid funds provided by the European Social Funds and other

institutions acting for the benefit of people with disabilities [34, p. 51];

- conducting an information campaign for the abandonment of discriminatory practices [35];

- assisted employment of people with disabilities, including their employment in conditions enabling vocational rehabilitation [12, p. 29].

The above solutions give a chance for full inclusion of disabled people in social and professional life. They also provide guidelines for improving the areas of education, employment and in particular the professional activity of people with disabilities in the labour market. According to the research conducted by GUS BAEL, since 2018 there has been an increase in the economic activity index of disabled people in Poland. Currently, the value of this index is 28.3% [36]. This means that the adopted systemic tasks concerning professional activity have an impact on areas of decisive importance for people with disabilities, and in particular, they satisfy their social and individual needs. One of the important tasks is to support the process of professional activity with aid services offered by labour offices in the field of active job seeking. Services of this kind were introduced by the Act on Promotion of Employment [33, item 172]. Job advisors of county labour offices prepare an individual action plan for each unemployed person, adjusted to the profile of aid [37]. Additionally, within the framework of employment promotion, mitigating the effects of unemployment and professional activation, county employment offices support the unemployed, inter alia, through:

- directing them to labour market institutions in order to diagnose problems and help in career planning,

- organising and financing training, vocational education and internships and awarding and paying out scholarships,

- assisting in obtaining suitable employment or job offers,

- informing about the current situation and expected changes in the local labour market, including the rights and obligations of the unemployed,

- initiating or organising contacts with employers,

- organising training to improve professional qualifications or other qualifications which improve the chances of taking up or maintaining employment, gainful employment or economic activity,

- diagnosing labour market demand for specific occupations, specialities and qualifications, taking into account the need for training

- financing the costs associated with participation in trade and job fairs organised by

the provincial employment office in the context of job placement, in particular those carried out within the EURES network,

- other activities carried out as part of job placement, training or vocational guidance [37].

As indicated by the aid measures presented above, the degree of professional activity of people with disabilities depends mainly on individual needs and abilities of the individual. Moreover, the age and education of the disabled person is an important factor determining their participation in the proposed measures concerning employment promotion, mitigating the effects of unemployment and economic activation. These people, aged 16 and over, in most cases remain in the labour market as unemployed or economically passive. The economic activity rate of people with disabilities of working age in 2018 was 30.2% and the employment rate, depending on the degree of disability, was 28.2%, [38]. The level of education of disabled people is significant. In 2018, the highest economic activity was achieved by people with disabilities with higher and secondary education [39]. On the other hand, the highest percentage of disabled unemployed people were those with lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary education and with general secondary education [40]. Most people with disabilities of working age are still outside the labour market [41, p. 51]. The main reasons for this state of affairs are: the inflexible process of vocational and continuing education of these people in terms of labour market needs and barriers hindering or preventing them from functioning in their social and professional life [42].

Social integration, equalisation of opportunities and combating the still existing discrimination are also important [43, p. 32]. In this context, it should be stressed that in solving the problems of unemployment of people with disabilities, tasks that increase professional activity are important. One of the basic documents in this respect is the National Action Plan for Employment, which, by adopting the European Union guidelines for the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy in the area of the labour market, increases the employment opportunities of people with disabilities through [44]:

- promotion of accessibility and universal design as an effective way of integrating people with disabilities and special needs into the labour market,

- raising knowledge in the field of vocational rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities among employees of public administration, including above all local government,

– implementation of systemic changes to support entry into the labour market and maintaining the employment of the most disadvantaged disabled,

– extending the support to disabled self-employed people and farmers and their household members,

– introducing a job trainer to increase the employment of these people,

– implementing and promotion of national and supra-regional solutions in the field of professional activation and social integration of the disabled as being in a particularly difficult situation on the labour market,

– increasing the opportunities for disabled people to use internships as a labour market instrument,

– promotion in obtaining higher education by people with disabilities [44].

The presented measures have been aimed at counteracting professional inequality, and additionally they determine the areas of activity in the field of social policy. In addition, they define tasks to promote employment and counteract unemployment. An important task of social policy is primarily to satisfy basic needs, at least at the level of a decent human life [12, p. 19]. The European Social Fund guarantees the financing or co-financing of tasks that meet the individual and social needs of people with disabilities on their way of life. This translates into raising the qualifications and education, thus increasing the professional activity, securing equal opportunities and making it significantly easier to meet needs. Support is provided through rehabilitation, educational and professional activities [45, p. 109] and any assistance at every stage of the professional development of these people.

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**ІНДИВІДУАЛЬНІ І СОЦІАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ В ЖИТТІ ЛЮДЕЙ
З ОБМЕЖЕНИМИ МОЖЛИВОСТЯМИ**

Анотація. Розглядаються проблеми, пов'язані із задоволенням індивідуальних та соціальних потреб людей з обмеженими можливостями. Зазначається, що люди з обмеженими можливостями очікують індивідуальної та пропонованої підтримки від неурядових установ та організацій, які опікуються людьми з обмеженими можливостями на місцевому рівні.

Схарактеризовано організаційно-правові норми щодо соціальної та професійної інтеграції, доступності, незалежності та рівності осіб з обмеженими можливостями на ринку праці. Теоретичні питання, порушені у статті, стосуються проблем людей з обмеженими можливостями та варіантів їх вирішення на місцях, зокрема, щодо запобігання нерівності в освіті та професійній сфері.

Проаналізовано чинники, що сприяють професійній освіті та працевлаштуванню людей з обмеженими можливостями у гнучку та відкриту систему професійної взаємодії. Відзначено важливість адаптації закладів професійної та неперервної освіти,

робочих місць та соціального та професійного середовища до потреб та можливостей людей з обмеженими можливостями.

Зазначено, що в системі освіти та професійній діяльності важливим є працевлаштування людей з обмеженими можливостями за допомогою служб надання допомоги. Особи з обмеженими можливостями очікують допомоги та підтримки від кар'єрних консультантів та помічників як у професійному житті, так і в соціальному середовищі.

Запропоновано шляхи вдосконалення відносин на рівні освіта – соціальне середовище – ринок праці у контексті співвіднесення професійної освіти із соціальним середовищем та ринком праці.

Ключові слова: індивідуальні та соціальні проблеми; люди з обмеженими можливостями; підтримка; допомога; рівні можливості; інтеграція.

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